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# INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM

CHRISTIAN WITNESSING  
AND WORK

THE CALL OF CHRIST TO THE LAITY

BY

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TO  
JOHN H. CONVERSE, LL.D.  
AS AN EXPRESSION OF REGARD FOR HIS INTEREST IN  
EVANGELISTIC WORK

MANIFESTED IN HIS ABLE AND UNTIRING PERSONAL SERVICES AND IN HIS  
PRINCELY MUNIFICENCE IN HIS OFFERINGS FOR ITS SUP-  
PORT, THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED BY THE  
AUTHOR.



## PREFACE.

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WHILE it is true of the opening of the twentieth century, with its strenuous intellectual life, as it has been true of no preceding age, that "of making many books there is no end," the writer flatters himself that the Christian public will not look for an apology for the appearance of this volume. The present lively interest in lay evangelism and especially in individual evangelism, is such as to insure attention to any well directed effort to promote these objects. As this interest is of comparatively recent origin, the literature of the subject is not extensive. Some brochures and small volumes in which certain phases of the subject are discussed have appeared. But so far as the author's reading extends there is no work before the American Church which covers the ground of this volume. It is his understanding that this is the first attempt, at least in this country, to compass, in a brief space, the entire subject of lay evangelism.

Of the value of this work and of its adaptation to the end which the writer has had in view, the Church will judge. Of the opening for a work of this general character, it is believed that there is

no question. If the work of the lay evangelist is important, it is important that the attention of the Church should be called to the subject and that the young and inexperienced believer should receive such instruction as will prepare him for an efficient and successful discharge of his duty.

It is fit, perhaps, that it should be said that this volume has been written from the point of view of the Evangelical Church. It is not designed for any particular denomination, and it is believed that it contains nothing to which any branch of the Evangelical Church will take exception. It recognizes the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, and as the ultimate authority in all Christian teaching.

In the preparation of this volume, the aim and end of which the writer has not, at any time, consciously lost sight, is sufficiently indicated by the full title. His labor has been an effort to awaken the membership of the Evangelical Church to a deeper sense of their obligation to them that are without and of the momentous importance of the work of the laity and in bringing the world to Christ. If in any degree this volume shall serve to promote this end, or prove instrumental in preparing the way for more effective labor in this direction, his toil will produce its legitimate fruit.

PHILADELPHIA, April, 1908.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest."—John iv., 35.



## INTRODUCTION.

A CONSIDERATION of the subject of this volume is always in order. There is no period of time, no condition of the church in which a discussion of the duty of Christian Witnessing and Work is inappropriate; but it appears especially befitting in a time of religious declension. When the spiritual life of the church is at ebb, we do well to stir ourselves up to a renewed earnestness and activity in the service of Christ.

That the church of this country has fallen upon such a time is a proposition that need not be argued. Unhappily it is too obvious to admit of question. Like the darkness of Egypt it is a condition "that may be felt." If we fail to apprehend it, we fail to "discern the signs of the times."

It is to be said to the praise of divine grace that the shades of the picture are not all dark. There are pulpits, not a few, from which the Gospel is faithfully and earnestly preached, and there are members of the churches who are in a good degree alive to their obligations to their Master and who are earnestly engaged in His work, but such instances are so rare, so few in proportion to the entire number, as to attract attention. These bright exceptions serve to render the prevailing coldness and devotion to the world the more painfully apparent. It is not to be

concealed that the church of the present as a body, has lapsed into a state of formality and indifference to duty, the result of which is a spiritual paralysis where there is not spiritual death.

In this regard there is no conflict between the pulpit and the pew. If the utterances of the pulpit have become ethical and secular rather than spiritual and evangelical they are such as the hearers demand. It is a law of the spiritual world that the character of the pulpit is determined by that of the pew. The spiritual and evangelical tone of the pulpit is always as high as the membership of the church really desires. It is not the object of this volume to discuss either the shortcomings or the obligations of the ministry, but it is assumed that for the present state of worldliness and spiritual apathy the pulpit and the pew are alike responsible. It is due to the agreement of the two classes in their neglect of duty and in their devotion to the world.\*

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\*Now the present condition of the churches and of professing Christians very generally is one negatively of deep moral and spiritual depression and also positively of intense devotion to worldliness, self-indulgence and carnality. Membership in a Christian Church should stand for *a changed heart and a changed life*; whereas to-day it has ceased to stand for them. The churches should again recognize the almost lost Bible distinction of all men into *two classes* and two only, *the lost and the saved*; and they should devote their energies to transforming lost into saved, through the new birth, or regeneration, thereby increasing a godly membership. Confessedly, there has



But an appeal to the laity at the opening of the twentieth century appears especially befitting, not only on account of the low estate of Zion, but also with reference to the widespread anticipation on the part of the spiritual element of the church that better days are at hand. It is believed by many that we are on the eve of a great awakening and of a rich harvest of souls. There is an expectation of and a waiting for, a time of refreshing in which the spiritual life of the church will be greatly quickened, and sinners in large numbers will be brought into the Kingdom of Christ. If it is true that such expectations are not always met, it is also true doubtless that this attitude of the praying people of the church is in a high degree favorable to the desired realization of this hope. A

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been of late an appalling decrease in the numbers added to the churches of most of the denominations, to say nothing of the quality of the additions. Spiritual religion is at a low ebb.

This condition of the churches must not only be understood, but must also be remedied before anything worth while can be done for the lost world outside of the churches. The needed revival must begin, brethren, with professing Christians. Should there be brought about a so-called revival and an ingathering of multitudes into their churches as they are, how could the results be other than disastrous? How could the ingathering fail to partake of the worldliness and pride and self-sufficiency and corruption of the bodies that gathered them in, and so to be swallowed up in the same spiritual darkness?

The first and supreme need, dear brethren, is that for a *mighty smartening and quickening of the professed disciples of Christ* that shall remedy the spiritual deadness and dearth that are abroad in the land. Let us seek, first, then, to remedy the low degree

multitude in this and other lands is waiting upon God in the way of his appointment for the anticipated blessing. Much earnest and believing prayer has been and continues to be offered for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for a revival that will reach the mass of the unconverted. There is a movement in this direction, not such a movement as is anticipated by the faithful, but a movement, nevertheless, for the promotion of the desired end.

But if the opening of the new century is to witness a great awakening and the conversion of sinners in great numbers, a very large share of the work through which it is to be accomplished is to be done by the laity. The private members of the churches, the people of the Lord must come up to his help

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of spirituality, the lack of vital communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, the secularization of religion, the absence of that quickened conscience that has resulted in the reign of righteousness in all spheres of life. *The churches must be transformed before the world can be saved and reformed.*—"A Campaign of Education," issued by the Central Committee of the Presbyterian Ministers and Elders of New York City.

In every church there are members, and ordinarily not a few of them, who (under present circumstances) are passive. They come to church and listen; they are profited; they go home and live good, pious lives and honor Christ. And yet they contribute only by their presence and their money to the prosperity and the welfare of the church. They do not materially help in pushing or forwarding the work of gathering others into the church. What can be done to arouse their activity and make them a working force?—*Christian Observer.*

against the mighty. Fields are never won by men who wear an epaulet and a sword. It is the men in the ranks, the men who carry the muskets that draw the blood and win the victory. It is to the common soldier that his country looks in the hour of peril. As a great English Admiral was about to go into battle with a powerful foe, his word to his men was: "England expects every man to do his duty." The men did their duty and the battle was won. Now this is just what our Captain expects of every soldier of the cross. And to a great extent the result of the battle depends upon the fidelity of the men in the ranks. If a great victory is to be won for Christ it is to be won by the men and women in the pews.

Effective leadership is of vital importance. It is no part of the object of this volume to disparage the work of the ministry or the public preaching of the cross. The pulpit is the great instrumentality for the edifying of the church and for the saving of the lost. It is the ordinance of God that through the foolishness of preaching the world is to be subdued to Christ. The work of the laity is not a substitute for that of the pulpit. Without the pulpit very little would be accomplished by the people in the pews. It is the public preaching of the cross that is "The Power of God and the Wisdom of God." In its relation to the pulpit the work of the membership is co-operative and supplementary. It is the

work of the laity to take up the message of the pulpit and carry it to them that are without. It is through the union and co-operation of these two homogeneous forces that men in large numbers are brought to Christ.

No one is more ready to recognize the necessity and importance of this service than the successful pastor. It is related of Dr. Lyman Beecher that when he was carrying on his great work in Boston and converts in large numbers were coming into the church he was asked by a brother in the ministry how it was that he was able to do so much, replied, "Oh! It is not I that do it; it is my church. I preach on the Sabbath, as hard as I can, and then I have four hundred church members who go out and preach every day of the week. They are preaching all the time, and that is the way with God's blessing that we get along so well."

It may be said that the work of promoting revivals and of arousing the church to a sense of its obligation in a time of religious declension, belongs especially to the ministry and to the pastors of the churches. This is true, but it is also true that the coldness and apathy of the pulpit is a very poor apology for the worldliness and indifference of the laity. A revival, in many instances, has begun with one or more members of the church. Revivals come in answer to prayer, and God is as ready to hear the lay worker as the minister. But if this is true the pews as well

as the pulpit are responsible for the spiritual state of the church.

It is by no means to be assumed that there is danger, that, in an effort to increase the spiritual life and power of the church, the laity may be antagonized by the pulpit. Evidence of a revival of spiritual interest on the part of his people is not likely to be regarded with opposition, nor even with indifference by a pastor. It is safe to assume that such evidence will be in the highest degree grateful to the pastor and that he will be very prompt to respond to any movement in this direction. What is needed is a hearty co-operation of the two parties, in the Master's work, and in a time of religious declension neither should recognize any obligation to wait for the other. Each party has its mission and each is responsible to Christ for the discharge of present duty. It is the part of each to exert a quickening and supporting influence upon the other, and where there is a failure to discharge this obligation there is a strong probability that each may confirm the other in a course of worldliness and neglect of duty. Each is bound to be helpful to the other, and this will be accomplished only as each is conscientiously and earnestly devoted to its own proper work.

The history of the church, and especially the history of revivals during the past half century affords very strong encouragement to lay effort. The last

general revival of the American church had its origin in a prayer meeting established by a layman. The Fulton Street Prayer Meeting, held at first in the lecture room of the Old North Reformed Dutch Church of New York City, was organized October 8th, 1857, by Mr. J. C. Lamphier; and this proved to be the beginning of the great revival of 1858. The influence of the revival extended through a large part of the United States and it has been estimated that it resulted in the conversion of a million of souls. But this was especially the work of the laity. The members of the churches were its chief promoters. Though the Gospel was faithfully preached no great evangelist appeared as the leader of the movement. No Finney, no Moody and no Torrey or Chapman arose to attract the multitude by his eloquence or renown. The great instrumentality through which the churches were aroused and sinners in large numbers were attracted to the cross were meetings for prayer and for the informal exposition of the Word. It was a revival of the spirit of prayer and of reverence for and of interest in the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, among the members of the churches. The movement honored God in magnifying the work of the Holy Spirit. In giving efficacy to the ordinary means of grace God was pleased to show his people that the quickening of the church and the saving of souls are not by human might or power but by the

use of the appointed means in trustful dependence upon the Almighty arm.

Not only in its origin but also in the carrying forward of this work the laity were especially in evidence. Throughout the country the noonday prayer meeting was taken up in the cities and other centers of population; and wherever these meetings were held the members of the churches were their chief supporters. To a great extent the laborers were the lay exhorters and the lay workers. The work was not carried on without the public preaching of the Gospel. The Word was clothed with power because it was sustained by the earnest labor of the membership of the churches. This revival was an illustration of a Scriptural, a wise and hearty co-operation of the pulpit and the pew in Gospel work. In its results it showed the wisdom of the Scriptural method of preaching the Gospel publicly and from house to house. A large portion of the converts were brought in through the personal labors of private christians "whose hearts God had touched." The work of the laity was honored of God as his own chosen instrumentality for the bringing of sinners into His Kingdom. And in the success of this work we have an example for the church in all time.

A more recent and a still more impressive illustration of this truth is presented by the great revival in Wales. That was an awakening that in a most won-

derful manner exemplified the power of prayer, and in which God was pleased to put especial honor upon individual evangelism and upon lay preaching. In a fraternal message from the General Assembly of the Calvinistic Methodist Church of Wales to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., 1906, the following words occur: "It is impossible to give an adequate account of the rise and growth of this great and glorious revival, for which we, in common with all our Christian brethren had prayed so long and so earnestly. The manifestations of the Spirit were not confined to any one denomination, and though it first started in one of our own churches, and though one of our ministerial students has been the acknowledged leader, the strange movement spread quickly through all churches, and all sectarian differences were happily forgotten. The converts, most of whom, we are thankful to find, show signs of true conversion, are numbered by thousands. A new spirit and tone, which cannot be defined, but which will be instantly felt, now pervade our churches, and our young people have pre-eminently felt the compelling power of the Holy Spirit enlisting all their varied gifts in Christian service."

A similar view is presentive in the following words. "What is the origin of the movement? In the name of God let us all cease trying to find it. At least let us cease trying to trace it to any one man or conven-



tion. You cannot trace it, and yet I will trace it tonight. Whence has it come? All over Wales—I am giving you roughly the result of the questioning of fifty or more persons at random in the work,—a praying remnant have been agonizing before God about the state of the beloved land, and it is through that, that the answer of fire has come.”\*

So far as human instrumentalities are concerned the origin and progress of this great work are due to the “Praying Remnant” and the labors of the laity of the church.

If the opening of the new century is to witness a great forward movement for the subduing of the world to Christ there must be a repetition in all of our churches of the work of these great revivals.

Their aggressive forces must be revitalized by the presence of the Spirit of God and in his strength the pulpit and the pew must together go forth to earnest and faithful work in the service of Christ. The church must move forward in a solid phalanx with a determination to rest from its labors only when the world shall have been won to Christ. There must be a revival that shall be unlike all preceding revivals, in that it has a beginning but shall have no end until the coming of the Son of Man. The church must be

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\*Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, D.D., in the “Story of the Welsh Revival,” page 43.

moved to unite in the prayer of Moses: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them,"\* and it must wait upon him until the answer comes. The church not only in its ministry but also in its membership must become a witnessing and a working church.†

What is needed is not a spasm of evangelical fervor and fidelity to be followed by another relapse into worldliness and indifference but a continued devotion to the work of Christ. There is no reason why a revival should ever end except with the conversion of the world. Aside from the special instrumentalities and services which may be employed and which are by no means essential to a revival, the church is simply doing its duty. In a time of refreshing it is simply doing what it ought always to be doing. If the Church were always faithful there would always be a

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\*Num. xi., 29.

†"There have never before in all the history of the Church been such elements of power. It may be true that, in the prevailing declension the individual has been partially lost in the machinery, perfect for its ends almost beyond imagination, and that the machinery needs to be made personal and spiritual again. Nevertheless, the youthful spirit is at present manifestly susceptible to a peculiar degree, and the breath of the Holy Spirit can transform even dead machinery into living organism in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. With that breath all Zion would be on fire for Christ and the lost world."—"The Forward Movement—How to Be Brought About," *Homiletic Review* for March, 1901, by the Rev. D. S. Gregory, D.D., LL.D.

revival and sinners would be constantly coming to the cross. A state of revival is the normal condition of the Church, and for this we are always to labor and to pray.



## CHAPTER I.

# THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."—Luke ix., 23.



## THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL.

PRIMARILY, the call of the Gospel is a call to Christian service. It is a call to become a follower of Christ in conforming our lives to his character and in devoting ourselves to his work. To follow Christ in the Gospel sense, is to become like Christ in our moral nature and to become co-workers with him in giving the Gospel to the lost. The state of all fallen men is that of servitude. As sinners they have simply a choice of masters. The call of the Gospel to the unregenerate is a call to renounce the service of the world and to accept the service of Christ. In his conversion he simply accepts the service of a new master.

In his acknowledgment of Christ as his Saviour, the believer takes the position of a witness for him. He bears testimony to the Deity of Christ and to his power to give pardon and peace to the lost, and the work which he begins in his first act as a spiritual man, he is bound to continue through life. As far as he is true to his master his life is a life of witness-bearing and of work in his service.

This view of the Christian calling is plainly set forth by the Scriptures. To his apostles Jesus says, "I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit."\* He has called them to do his

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\*John xv., 16.

work in giving his Gospel to the world. In this light obviously his call was understood by the apostles and primitive believers. In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul designates himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ,"\* and to the Colossians he says, "Epaphras who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you."† Similar language is employed by other apostles. They recognized their call and that of their fellow disciples as a call to engage in the work of their Master. The original word employed is very expressive. It designates a bond-servant, or slave. It was used to designate a person who, in a legal sense owes service to another. Servants of this class belonged to their masters, they owed them not only implicit obedience but also any service which they were capable of rendering. The apostles recognized this strong word as a fit designation of the relation which they sustained to Christ. They could not express too strongly their sense of obligation to their Master. In designating their own position as servants of Christ, the apostles used the strongest word in their vocabulary. In setting forth this relation they knew no word that expressed more than they felt. They were not ashamed to acknowledge this relation and they cheerfully accepted the service that it involved. They recognized the obligation imposed by their call and they regarded themselves as greatly

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\*Rom. i., 1. †Col. iv., 12.



honored and exalted by the service which they rendered. To be co-workers with Christ, to be "laborers together with God" is the highest honor enjoyed by mortal men. In comparison with this, the diadems and scepters of princes are but gaudy toys.

There was nothing peculiar in the call of the apostles and primitive believer. Though the apostles, as such, performed a special work yet as preachers of the Gospel they wrought under the same call and commission as that of their successors in all succeeding time; and the call of the primitive believer was simply that under which his fellow disciples in every age have been brought into the Kingdom of Christ. If we have been called of God, we have been called not only to a life of holy obedience, but also to one of witness-bearing and of labor in the service of our Master. We are here for work. We have been called as laborers in the vineyard of our Lord. We are true to our calling and to ourselves only as we are earnestly striving to honor God by lives of devotion to his service.\*

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\*As an indication of the present tendency in the direction of a return to the methods of the primitive church, I copy the following action of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, at a meeting held March 4th, 1901:

WHEREAS, The power of the church is very largely realized in the services of her membership; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the pastors and sessions of the churches within the bounds of the Presbytery be requested to remind their people that church membership involves an imperative call

The life on earth is not the saint's rest. "There remaineth a rest to the people of God." This rest is in reserve for all the faithful, and it will be a large reward for all the toil of our life of service. But it will come to us only "on the other side of Jordan." "There is rest for the weary." "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest."\*

"In a napkin smooth and white,  
Hidden from all mortal sight,  
My one talent lies to-night.

Mine to hoard, or mine to use,  
Mine to keep, or mine to lose;  
May I not do what I choose?

Ah! the gift was <sup>so</sup> only lent,  
With the giver's known intent,  
That it should be wisely spent.

And I know he will demand  
Every farthing at my hand;  
When I in his presence stand.

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to Christian service; that this call is just now emphasized by the enlarged opportunities open to the church; that there is work for every disciple of Christ; that more faithful endeavor will certainly increase the number of those who hear the preaching of the Gospel; that the active assistance of church members, both men and women, must insure a blessed increase in the roll of our communicants, and that a united forward movement may bring the revival of religion for which we hope and pray.

\*Job iii., 17.

What will be my grief and shame,  
When I hear my humble name,  
And cannot repay his claim!

One poor talent—nothing more!  
All the years that have gone o'er  
Have not added to the store.

Some will double what they hold,  
Others add to it ten-fold,  
And will pay the shining gold.

Would that I had toiled like them!  
All my sloth I now condemn;  
Guilty fears my soul o'erwhelm.

Lord, O teach me what to do!  
Make me faithful, make me true,  
And the sacred trust renew.

Help me, ere too late it be,  
Something yet to do for thee,  
Thou who hast done all for me."



## CHAPTER II.

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# THE SOURCE OF POWER IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts i., 8.



## THE SOURCE OF POWER IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

It is elementary theology that the power to render acceptable and effective service in the Kingdom of Christ, is from above. The doctrine is succinctly and forcibly stated by the apostle when he says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."\* Whatever may be the intrinsic excellence of the weapon, it is mighty for the work of Christ, only "through God." The believer is strong for this service only as the presence of the Holy Spirit is to him an abiding consciousness or as he is moved by his power. The essential qualification then for Christian service is obtained by waiting upon God for the endowment of his Spirit. As he was about to be separated from them and as they were soon to enter upon their great work of establishing the New Testament Church, Jesus said to his apostles, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The apostles and primitive believers were prepared for their work only as they had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

In this regard there was nothing peculiar in their preparation for Christian service. These words were left on record for our instruction. The believer of the present, as of all the past, and whether in the pulpit

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\*II. Cor. x., 4.

or in the pew, must prepare for his work after the manner here prescribed. He must adopt the same method which they were instructed to follow. As these disciples were assembled after his resurrection, Jesus came to them and "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem," that is, to enter upon their work, "but wait for the promise of the Father which, saith he, ye have heard of me."\* This promise is that of the baptism of the Spirit. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."† For this baptism, the apostles and their associates waited in accordance with the word of their Lord in believing, earnest and continued prayer. In the same connection it is said, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."‡ This company of praying believers included the apostles and their fellow disciples. It was a meeting, not of preachers exclusively, but of as many of the followers of Christ as could well be assembled. And the endowment which they received in answer to their prayers is the primary and the one essential source of power in the work of Christ. Without this intellectual gifts and attainments will avail nothing. It is written, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."§

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\*Acts i., 4. †Acts i., 5. ‡Acts i., 14. §Zech. iv., 6.



A LIVING FAITH, AN ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS IN  
INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

The work of the Spirit upon the heart of the believer has its manifestation in the gifts and graces by which he is furnished for the service of Christ. Among these the first and chief is a living faith in Christ as an atoning Saviour and in the truth of his revealed word. Faith is the moving principle, the primary incentive in every form of work for Christ. It is to the lack of this grace and to the absence of the service to which it prompts that the present spiritual stupor of the church is to be attributed. It is this that has brought on the paralysis of the motor nerve and unfitted the mass of professing Christians for the Master's work. Men work for Christ only as they believe his word. As long as they are in any doubt in regard to the teachings of the Scriptures they will make very little effort to extend the Kingdom of Christ. They enter in earnest upon his work only as they are brought to feel the tremendous necessity of this service. They take it up only as they are moved by a faith that enables them to see the unregenerate by whom they are surrounded as utterly lost, and as in imminent danger of eternal condemnation. They must be brought to the feeling that they themselves have been plucked as brands from the everlasting burnings and they must be moved by this awful truth to an intense desire to be instrumental in rescuing others from the sinner's doom. They must be

conscious of their duty in this direction. They must come to a very deep conviction that sinners are lost, and that God has laid upon them the obligation to bring them to Christ. There must be the feeling that this is an essential service, that there is a class of unsaved persons whose salvation, under God, depends upon their fidelity. If they do their duty, their friends and neighbors will be brought to Christ; if they neglect it, they will continue to pursue their way to eternal death. They must be profoundly impressed with the momentous importance of the service and with the solemnity of their call to engage in it.

"Ministers," said an eminent servant of God, "will never do much good until they begin to pull sinners out of the fire." This is true. Until they are enabled to see their unregenerate hearers as lost, as every moment exposed to the flames of an eternal Hell, and to recognize their direct personal obligation to bring them to Christ, they will accomplish very little for their salvation. And what is true of the ministry is no less true of the laity. If they would see any saving results of their labor, their own hearts must be on fire with zeal for the glory of the cross and with love for souls that are ready to perish. Their spiritual perceptions must be so quickened by a living faith as to enable them to see impenitent sinners rushing madly to their doom. They must have before their minds a vivid and impressive image of an approaching judgment, of

a Heaven of unspeakable bliss and glory and of an eternal Hell, the torments of which are neither to be described nor conceived. The unutterable horrors of the second death must be to their minds an awful and ever present reality. They must have such a view of the retributions of eternity as shall inspire something of the emotions of the great apostle when he said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."\*

He must partake in the measure of which he is capable of the spirit of John Knox, when wrestling in prayer for his beloved country, he cried: "Oh, God, give me Scotland or I die."

#### REPENTANCE AND FORSAKING OF SIN IMPLIED.

A living faith is exercised only in connection with repentance and the forsaking of sin. We have faith in lively exercise only as we abandon all sin and as all that is offensive to God is hateful to us. Sin indulged and cherished in any form blunts and paralyzes every spiritual grace. It is fatal to any adequate apprehension of spiritual truth and to any proper sense of obligation to God and to lost men. A state of sin is a state of spiritual indifference and of insensibility to the claims of Christ and of a lost world. It is for this reason that when Jesus began to preach, he began to

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\*Rom. ix., 3.

say: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."\* As repentance was the essential preparation for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ, when he began to preach, so it is to-day the first step in an adequate preparation for his service.

The sin of the church is not the same as that of the world. It is not robbery and murder in the ordinary sense of these terms, it is not profanity and drunkenness, nor any of what are regarded as the grosser forms of wickedness. It is that covetousness and devotion to the world which are designated by the Scriptures as "idolatry." It is the sin which our Lord describes as the "cares and riches and pleasures of this life," and on account of this he affirms that the subjects "bring no fruit to perfection."† This form of sin is the parent of all indifference and unfaithfulness in the service of Christ. As long as the supreme interest is in the sinful pleasures and pursuits of the world there is no proper interest in spiritual truth or spiritual service. Where there is no sincere submission to the commands and requirements of Christ, there is no real and honest devotion to his work. Of these sins there must be repentance, a repentance that will move us to abandon this course of life and to devote ourselves to the work of Christ. Without this there will be no real desire for a blessing and God will never use us in the carrying forward of his work.

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\*Mat. iv., 17. †Luke viii., 14.

## THE REMEDY FOR SIN TO BE APPREHENDED.

With this view of the condition of the lost and with our response to the call to repentance our faith must apprehend the Lord Jesus as an Almighty and as an all-sufficient Saviour. We must hear his voice of mercy falling upon the sinner's ear and we must believe in the promise of God to make use of very imperfect human instrumentalities in rescuing lost men from perdition. We must believe in our own call, in our own mission as laborers in the Master's vineyard. We must not only believe that it is indeed "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the chief, but we must also enter upon our work expecting that God will be pleased to make use of our feeble efforts in the accomplishment of his gracious purposes. We must go forth expecting to bring sinners to the Saviour. It is this faith and this alone that inspires

## THE EARNESTNESS THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS.

The lack of intense earnestness is understood by the world as a lack of faith. Unregenerate men receive the impression that professing Christians do not believe the teachings of the Scriptures in regard to their character as sinners and the punishment that awaits them in the life to come. They rightly interpret the spiritual

apathy of believers as an evidence of their lack of faith, and on this ground many reject the doctrines of the Gospel. It is treated by many as a strong testimony against the Christian faith. A professed infidel said to the Rev. D. O. Philip of Scotland, "Why, sir, did I believe, as you profess to do, and did I act as you act I should feel ashamed. You profess to believe that the world is lost and going to final perdition and that you have a remedy that can save it. Why do you not go forth and plead with your perishing fellow-men, with all the earnestness which such a case demands? Why do you not go among the nations that are sitting in darkness, that know not the God of your Bible, and afford them at least a chance of obtaining salvation? If your creed were mine I could not rest till I had warned men of their condition and entreated them to flee from the wrath to come."\* It may be conceded that such remarks are prompted by a spirit of unreasoning hostility to the Gospel and that they are an excuse not a reason for infidelity. But it is not to be denied that the lack of earnestness and singleness of purpose on the part of the professed followers of Christ in their Christian service is strongly adapted to confirm the unconverted in their unbelief and impenitence. It cannot be too constantly borne in mind that it is by the manifestation of intense earnestness that men are most

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\*Prim. Pity Revived, page 191.

powerfully moved to an acceptance of the cross. If we would be largely successful in winning souls, we must be able to say with the great apostle, "This one thing I do."\* It is by the manifestation of this spirit and by this alone that a deep impression is made upon a world lying in sin.

This is the spirit by which those who have been largely successful in Christian service have been characterized. The pastor of Harlan Page says of him, "His eye was single. He had *one definite object* before him. It was not fame nor family, nor ease nor pleasure, but to *honor Christ in the salvation of men.*" This testimony is obviously true. It is also true that his earnestness and singleness of purpose were among the chief elements of his power and success in winning souls. He moved men by the manifest sincerity of his belief that they were lost, and by the intensity of his desire to bring them to Christ. He was owned and blessed and honored of God not because he possessed extraordinary talents, either natural or acquired, but because he was "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and because he was intensely in earnest in his devotion to his Master's work. And whoever would be largely successful in turning sinners to the Saviour must be animated in some good degree by the spirit and purpose of this devoted servant of Christ.

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\*Phil. iii., 13.

**EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS NOT A CONDITION OF SUCCESS.**

To the mass of believers it should be a ground of especial encouragement that talents of a high order are by no means essential to successful Christian service. It is not necessary to be learned, or eloquent, or to be in a position of prominence or of worldly influence in order to labor with efficiency in this work. These talents may increase the effectiveness of our service, but are by no means essential to it. Whoever has a heart overflowing with love to Christ and to lost men is capable of effectiveness in winning souls. Indeed, where there is a warm heart and an earnest purpose a faltering tongue may be an element of power. The invitation thus presented may be the more impressive on that very account. The effort to awaken a friend or neighbor to a sense of his need of Christ may leave a deeper impression because it is made with hesitancy and embarrassment. It may arrest attention where eloquent and fitly chosen words would have fallen upon leaden ears. Let no one, then, excuse himself from the service of Christ on this ground. God has a work for each and a work for all. The only essential qualification for it is within the reach of every believer. The one essential gift is to be had for the asking. It is obtained by waiting upon God, in believing and importunate prayer. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to



them that ask him?"\* If we lack this gift it is simply because we are not seeking it in earnest. God has made his willingness to impart it so plain that it cannot be misunderstood. The responsibility for the possession of this gift has been laid upon every believer. "There is no doubt," says the biographer of Page, "that it was by continued and fervent prayer that he imbibed that glowing sense of eternal things, that love of souls and that heavenly unction, which were at once the spring of his fidelity, and under God the ground of his success."

#### THE FIRST PREPARATORY STEP.

We have here, then, the Scriptural direction for taking the first step in the work of preparation for Christian service. This is not the whole of preparation for Christian witnessing and work, but it is the beginning and a beginning without which the subsequent steps will be of little avail. The presence of the spirit is the one great gift in which all of the gifts and graces that are available for this service, have their springs. Having learned this, all others are of easy attainment, and when once possessed they are to be strengthened and developed by use. The spiritual capacities, like the physical and intellectual, derive their vigor and effec-

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\*Luke xi., 13.

tiveness from exercise. Whoever would multiply his talents for this service must be earnest and persevering in prayer and diligent and persistent in the use of the degree of strength of which he is already in possession.

### CHAPTER III.

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## THE BELIEVER AS A WITNESS FOR CHRIST.

"Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord."—Isaiah xliii., 10.



## THE BELIEVER AS A WITNESS FOR CHRIST.

### A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOSPEL.

The disciple of Christ stands before the world as a representative of Christianity. Theoretically at least his manner of living is an illustration of the spirit and of the principles of the Gospel. His life is the embodiment or the acting out of the spirit of Christ by which his heart and mind are animated. On this ground the world forms its estimate of the religion of Christ from its observation of the lives of his professed disciples. The enemies of the Gospel never weary of pointing to their infirmities as evidence against the inspiration of the Scriptures and the reality of the Christian faith. They maintain with great earnestness that the discrepancy between their professed principles and their character, or in other words, between their professions and their manner of living, is so great as to prove that experimental religion has only an imaginary existence.

Whether this position is well taken is not now the question. We are concerned only with the fact that the world forms its estimate of the religion of Christ from its observation of the lives of his professed disciples. It regards the church as an

embodiment and a reflection of the principles of the Gospel. Even when it is not animated by an antagonistic or critical spirit, it is looking to the church for an illustration of Scriptural morality and piety. It is looking to the lives of Christians for evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures and of the work of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men.

And so far as the judgment of the world upon this point is candid and unbiased it is altogether legitimate and befitting. It is the design of God that unregenerate men shall judge of the character of his religion by its fruit. It is his purpose that his people shall be known as such by their manner of living. To his ancient people he says: "Ye are my witnesses."\* From the connection in which the words were spoken it appears that his people are represented as witnesses to the truth of their religion. It is said: "Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God."† This was the point to be established and to its truth his people were the witnesses. The same thought in another form is presented by our Lord in his Sermon on the Mount. To his disciples he says: "Ye are the light of the world," \* \* \* "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."‡

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\*Isaiah xliii., 10. †Isaiah xliii., 12. ‡Matt. v., 14, 16.

In these words our Lord teaches his disciples that they are the light by which the world is to be guided in its search for truth and in its pursuit of life and immortality. And in view of this fact, they are admonished to let their light shine in such a manner that its significance will not be misapprehended. To the disciples as he was about to leave them, Jesus said: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."\*

The apostles and other primitive preachers were something more than expounders of the principles and precepts of the Gospel. They were personal witnesses, not only to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but also, in their manner of living, and especially, in the spirit in which they met the opposition and endured the persecution of the world, to the power of the Gospel to renew and sanctify the heart. They gave to the world an impressive illustration of the theory of the Gospel that there is a vital and controlling connection between Christ and his disciples.

It is the claim of the church that the believer's spiritual life is received from Christ, as the life of

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\*Acts i., 8.

the branch is drawn from that of the vine. It is maintained that his manner of life is the fruit of the Spirit of Christ which is in him. It is the profession of the believer that he is animated by the temper of his Divine Master. It was the personal testimony of the first disciples of Christ to the truth of this claim that gave to the first proclamation of the Gospel its extraordinary power and success. Judging of the character of the new religion from what they observed of its effect upon the hearts and lives of its subjects, unregenerate men were constrained to acknowledge its Divine origin and power. They exercised their right of private judgment and, in large numbers, were constrained to accept the Gospel.

#### NECESSITY OF THIS TESTIMONY.

It is not only the purpose of God that, as free moral agents, unregenerate men shall exercise this right of private judgment, but there is a necessity for it in the nature of things. They have no other means of judging of the character of the Christian faith. There is no other test to which they can subject the professions of the church. There is no other standard by which they can try the claims of believers to have been born of the Holy Ghost. From their point of view there is no other criterion of experimental piety. To them, the only reliable



evidence that believers are the subjects of a change of heart is a change of life.

And as a matter of fact, this is the standard by which men try the Gospel. If Christians with whom they come into contact, exhibit in a good degree, the spirit of their Master they are constrained to recognize the genuineness of their religion. If their lives are a fair reflection of the Christian spirit, imperfect though it must ever be, the unregenerate are convinced and attracted to the cross. They are made conscious of the power of Divine truth, and their hearts are opened to its saving influences. But if they see in the lives of believers no evidence of the work of the Spirit upon their hearts, they are confirmed in their unbelief and impenitence. They readily persuade themselves that experimental piety is a pretense and that they are justified in continuing to harden themselves against the Gospel. Indeed it is scarcely too much to say that the mass of the unbelieving come to a decision, either for or against Christ on this testimony alone.

It is not only of the Divine appointment then, but it is also fit and necessary that the world should judge of the character of evangelical religion by what it is able to observe of the lives of its professed subjects. It is appropriate and right that it should look here for evidence of the Divine origin and character of the Christian faith.

## EVERY CHRISTIAN A WITNESS.

The duty of witnessing for Christ is universal. It includes every believer. This follows from the nature and necessity of his testimony, and from the plan of God to make his people a light to the world. In the act of professing his faith in Christ, the believer takes the position of a witness and through every period of his life he continues to bear his testimony either for or against the Gospel.

This is true of every subject of Divine grace. The testimony of one believer may be regarded as stronger than that of another. His weight of character may give especial weight to his testimony. In the measure of their religious influence, as in other respects, believers exhibit a wide diversity. They are endowed with a diversity of gifts and they are invested with different degrees of spiritual power and capacity for service. But no disciple of Christ is intellectually so feeble, or occupies a position so humble as altogether to escape the observation of the world. The humblest and the most exalted are alike witnesses for Christ. The eyes of the unregenerate are upon every person who makes a profession of godliness. Their manner of life is a matter of constant observation and scrutiny. To all to whom they are witnesses, their testimony is a subject of the liveliest interest.

## THIS TESTIMONY NECESSARILY POSITIVE.

In this regard, as in many other directions relating to his character and conduct as a disciple of Christ, there is, to the believer, no neutral ground. He is either for Christ or against him. His testimony either sustains or opposes the cause which he represents. He is bound to be a witness for Christ. Christ requires this service at his hands, and the world is looking to him for positive testimony to the Divine origin and truth of his religion. Hence if his life fails to furnish unequivocal testimony in support of the Gospel, he will be understood as bearing positive testimony against it. And it will hardly answer to treat this conclusion as censorious or uncharitable. His obligation to his Master and to lost men calls imperatively for testimony in support of his religion, that can neither be controverted nor misunderstood; and if he fails to bear such testimony it is no matter of surprise that he is regarded as a positive witness against it. If there is no obvious difference between his manner of living and that of the upright and respectable man of the world, and if he is as much devoted to self,—if he is as uncharitable,—if he has as little self-control,—if he is as exacting and as earnestly devoted to the pursuit of the pleasures of the world, his influence is felt in opposition to the cause of Christ.

The world will conclude,—and who shall complain of its position,—either that he is acting the part of a deceiver, or that, if sincere, his religion is to be attributed to a persistent and remediless hallucination. In other words, he will be regarded either as a hypocrite or as an enthusiast. But however his religion may be accounted for or explained, he is regarded as a positive witness against his Master and his cause.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY INVOLVED.

From what has already appeared in regard to the position of the believer as a Christian witness, it is apparent that it involves a very grave responsibility. In his testimony, as a witness for Christ, he is exerting a very strong influence upon the spiritual interests of those by whom he is surrounded. There is a possibility, not to say a probability, that there are persons with whom his testimony may be decisive. It may either establish them in the belief and love of the truth, or confirm them in a state of unbelief and impenitence. It may attract them to the cross or determine their pursuit of the way to death.

It may be conceded that the process of reasoning by which ungodly men confirm themselves in their unbelief, on this ground, is altogether illogical and wholly without justification. Their sin in

this regard as in every other is without excuse. But it is to be borne in mind that we have to do simply with the fact of the momentous consequences of our Christian testimony. Whatever may be true of the sin of those to whom we are witnesses for Christ, the fact remains that the infirmities and lapses of the professed followers of Christ exert a very powerful influence upon the spiritual interests of those by whom we are surrounded.

This fact should impress every believer with a very deep sense of his responsibility as a Christian witness. He should habitually cherish the feeling that his relative, his friend, or his neighbor may be saved or lost as he is faithful or unfaithful in this solemn testimony. He should ever bear in mind that his testimony may win them to Christ or repel them from his service.

#### THE EXTENT AND THE MEASURE OF THIS INFLUENCE.

In a greater or less degree the influence of our testimony extends to all with whom we associate and to all who are in a position to observe our manner of living. It is felt by our fellow disciples. It quickens and sustains and comforts the saints with whom we associate or it is felt as a chilling and depressing force. If they are not strengthened and encouraged in their Christian life and in their work as disciples by our piety and zeal, they are grieved

and saddened by our worldliness and indifference and their hands are weakened in every effort to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom. And every unrepentant sinner, to whom we are witnesses, is made to feel either the attracting or repelling power of our life.

The measure of our influence upon "them that are without," is proportionate to the intimacy of the relation which we sustain toward them. It is very deeply felt by those with whom we are associated in the relations of business. The manner in which we conduct our business is regarded as a very decisive testimony to the character of our religion. It unmistakably indicates the moral or religious principle by which our business acts are governed. In their relations to our business, the principles of the Gospel are in direct conflict with the inclinations of the natural heart. Circumstances are frequently arising under which the conducting of our business in accordance with the requirements of the Gospel involves a sacrifice of our selfish interests from a regard to the authority and will of God.

Just here our religious character is subjected to a very severe test. We are regarded as bearing a very positive testimony to the character of the Christian faith. Under such circumstances a consistent Christian course is recognized as a very strong testimony to the genuineness of our religious

character. But if we exhibit a lack of Christian consistency, the world makes haste to say that our profession is either a delusion or a fraud.

Our Christian testimony leaves a strong impression in all of our social relations. There is a kind of social courtesy that is inspired by the spirit of the Gospel. There is a bearing toward those with whom we associate which, though it cannot be described, is at once recognized as a fruit of the Christian life. And the manifestation of this grace, or of a palpable lack of it, is a strong testimony either for or against our religion.

But perhaps there are no circumstances under which the testimony of the believer is so positive and strongly influential as in the domestic relations. There it appears almost if not altogether controlling. There is a fearful probability that the influence of husbands and wives, of parents and of brothers and sisters upon those toward whom they sustain these relations, may determine their eternal destiny. It is more than possible that the testimony borne may leave an impression and exert an influence that will give direction to their future both for time and for eternity. They may be saved or lost, as those to whom they are looking for this testimony are faithful or unfaithful to their solemn trust.

How solemn and awful, then, the responsibility of every believer, as a witness for Christ! In every

moral act so far as it is subject to observation, he is exerting an influence for weal or woe upon the spiritual and eternal interests of all by whom he is surrounded. To all to whom he is a witness for Christ, his manner of living is "a savor of life unto life" or of "death unto death." Any thoughtful man would count it a solemn thing to bear testimony in a court of justice upon which the life of a fellow mortal was suspended. But how much more solemn the responsibility when the testimony may determine his destiny for an endless eternity! It is impossible to overestimate the importance and solemnity of a life of witness-bearing as the servants of Christ. Any befitting sense of the responsibility of this position will render us careful to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."\* In all of our relations we shall be diligent in the effort to maintain "always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men."† We shall habitually bear in mind that "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."‡

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\*Eph. v., 15. †Acts xxiv., 16. ‡Rom. xiv., 7.



## CHAPTER IV.

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# EVERY BELIEVER A PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

"Let him that heareth say, Come."—Rev. xxii., 17.



## EVERY BELIEVER A PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

### THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

UNDER the Mosaic Dispensation the conducting of the public worship of God was committed to a particular class of men. One of the twelve tribes of Israel was set apart to this service and to members of this tribe was intrusted the exclusive administration of the rites and ordinances of the church. It was not permitted to men of any other tribe to bear a part in this work. Everything pertaining to it was committed to a divinely appointed priesthood. The religious instruction of the people also, aside from that of the domestic circle, was committed to a class of divinely-appointed teachers. The priests and the prophets conducted the worship of the sanctuary and gave religious instruction to the people.

The Jewish church was not called to the work of disseminating its religion. It was no part of its duty to proselyte the pagan nations by which it was surrounded. When the disciples of Moses had maintained this system in its purity and had transmitted it unalloyed to the generations to come, they had discharged their religious obligations.

But under the Gospel vastly more than this is required of the people of God. They are called to

the work of preaching Christ to a world lying in sin. To this end the house of Levi has been superseded by a priesthood that includes every believer. In the establishment of the new dispensation the time came when the prayer of Moses:\* "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets," was fully answered. All the saints became "kings and priests unto God and his Father."† To as many as have become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ it is written "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a *holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."‡ Again it is said: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."§ This sacerdotal order of the Christian church is not a priesthood simply in name. It is set apart to the work of offering up *spiritual sacrifices*. These sacrifices, as appears from the words of the prophet, are the sacrifices of praise and of service. He says: "Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips."|| These offerings are the worship and service of God in distinction from the calves of the stall, or the herd. They are the sacrifices which are offered

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\*Num. xi., 29. †Rev. i., 6. ‡I. Pet. ii., 5. §I. Pet. ii., 9.  
 ||Hosea xiv., 2.

by the New Testament priesthood. They are "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and they "show forth the praises of him who has called" them "out of darkness into his marvelous light."

The call of the believer is the call to a part in this priesthood. By virtue of this priesthood he becomes an intercessor for lost men and he offers sacrifices in their behalf. The believer is separated from the world and set apart to Christian service. He becomes a prophet, or teacher of the Gospel, and as such he receives a commission to engage in the work of evangelizing the world. He needs no formal setting apart to this priesthood, but under the consciousness of his call as a disciple of Christ, he may at once enter upon the service of Christ.

The call to service is involved in his call to the "royal priesthood." But he has a specific call in the words of Jesus: "Let him that heareth say, Come." No language could be more comprehensive. It includes every man, woman and child who has heard the Gospel invitation. There is no person who can claim to be an exception. The call is not addressed to scholars, to the intellectual, nor to those of ready speech. It is not addressed to the affluent, nor to those in exalted and commanding positions. No qualification is prescribed be-

yond that spiritual preparation of which every member of the "holy priesthood" is presumed to be already in possession.

Of the work of this priesthood in the Welsh revival, the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, D. D., writes: "If you go to Wales and get near to the work you will see the church returning to the true functions of her priesthood. What are the functions of the Christian priesthood? Of course, I need hardly stay to say that I am referring to the priesthood of the church, for there is no priesthood in the church separated from the church; and I am not at all sure that God is not restoring to Wales the true functions of priesthood, partly because she refuses to be dominated by any false system of priesthood."\*

#### A PUBLIC MINISTRY.

It is not to be forgotten that under the Gospel a class of men is set apart as public teachers of religion. They are commissioned as public preachers of the word and to them alone has been committed the administration of Gospel ordinances. They are ordained, not to a priesthood, for they belong to that order by virtue of their call as believers, but to the ministry of the word. As such they receive

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\*The Story of the Welsh Revival, page 47.

from the church a pecuniary support that they may devote themselves exclusively to this service. In magnifying the work of the "royal priesthood" we do not in any manner minimize that of the public ministry. The two classes are not antagonistic, or in any sense competitive spiritual forces. But each is supported and sustained by the other. The efficiency of lay work, very largely, depends upon the faithful and effective preaching of the cross from the sacred desk.

But while the work of the ministry is of prime importance, it enjoys no monopoly in the work of preaching Christ. Ministers are simply leaders of the sacramental host. They are leaders in the public preaching of the cross and they should be leaders in private and personal work for Christ. If Christ has said to them, especially, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," he has also said to every lay believer: "Let him that heareth say Come."

In the establishment of the Christian ministry it was not the design of God to commit the work of the world's evangelization to a class of men set apart exclusively to this service. It was the Divine purpose that all who believe should join with them in the invitations of the Gospel. The call of the "royal priesthood" as we have seen is a call to this work. Christ has left on record the declaration that he came "to

seek and to save that which was lost."\* This was the great end of his incarnation, of his public ministry and of his death on the cross. And all who are called as his disciples are called to bear a part with him in this work. The call is a call to become co-workers with Christ in giving the Gospel to the lost.

### THE BELIEVER SENT OF CHRIST.

In his prayer for his disciples, Jesus says: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."† He has sent his disciples to finish the work which he was sent of the Father to do on the earth and which he began in his public ministry. This work was not completed by his death and resurrection. It was simply begun and what he began he has sent his people to finish. He has called them to carry forward the work until the entire race shall have been brought to a knowledge of his salvation. And the work he has committed, not to any class but to all who believe.

### THE SPIRIT OF THE CHRIST LIFE.

This call comes to the believer, not simply in the words of inspiration but also in the spirit of the new life in Christ. It is involved in the zeal for the Divine glory and in the love of souls with which his breast

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\*Luke xix., 10. †John xvii., 18.



is inspired by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. All who are in Christ by a living faith, partake in some degree of his Spirit and of his interest in the souls of the lost. Of itself this spirit constitutes a call to the work of preaching Christ. To as many as are not called to the office of a public teacher of religion it is a call to join in a private capacity in the invitations of the pulpit. It is a call to labor in the sphere in which they have been placed by the providence of God for the evangelization of the world.

#### EXAMPLE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

A bright example of this spirit and of a prompt and hearty response to the call of the Gospel is presented by the work of the primitive believers. Not only the apostles and evangelists, but the mass of the disciples as well, became preachers of the Gospel. In the record of the persecution under which Stephen suffered martyrdom, it is said of the Church at Jerusalem: "They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles;" and in the same connection it is said of these disciples: "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."\* From this account it appears that the preachers were not apos-

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\*Acts viii., 1, 4.

bles and, so far as the record shows, none of them had been set apart to the work of the public ministry. But under the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost they had become very deeply imbued with the Spirit of the Gospel. They understood that by virtue of their acceptance of Christ they had become preachers of his Word. If they had not been ordained as pastors or as evangelists, they had been commissioned as hearers of the word to say: "Come." And wherever they were driven by this persecution they made haste to proclaim the glad tidings.

#### NOT PERSONS OF EXTRAORDINARY CAPACITY.

We have no intimation that these believers were persons of superior gifts or attainments. They were not professional scholars. They were not men or women of extraordinary learning or intelligence, or eloquence or of any unusual readiness of speech. They had no special capacity for addressing a popular audience, and we do not know that to any considerable extent they made use of this method of preaching. But they were men of God, men of faith and prayer. They had received a holy anointing for this service and their zeal for Christ and their love of souls gave them utterance. It not only opened their mouths, but it unloosed their tongues. And this, whatever may have been their intellectual

gifts or attainments, made them effective preachers of the Word. Whether they addressed a group or company of people or secured a hearing from a larger congregation or whether they talked informally to a household, or to an individual, their earnestness and the intensity of their convictions moved their hearers to repentance and to an acceptance of the Gospel. Moved by these impulses they had power with God and with men and prevailed. They were enabled to lay hold upon the unregenerate and to bring them to Jesus.

#### AN ELEMENT OF THE SUCCESS OF THE APOSTLES.

It is very largely to this faithful co-operation of the private members of the churches with the apostles and evangelists that their marvelous success is to be attributed. The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul present conclusive evidence that this preaching of the laity was general, and that it constituted a very important element of the work through which the Gentile nations were brought under the power of the Gospel. Wherever the apostles and evangelists went with their message, the laity became co-workers with them in giving the Gospel to the people. As soon as converts were made they were taught the duty of uniting with their public teachers in bringing sinners to the Saviour. At once they became co-workers with the apostles in their efforts to evan-

gelize the people. They not only aided their public teachers in the establishment and building up of a church where it had not, previously, been organized, but at their departure they assumed the care and direction of it. In the absence of an apostle or evangelist, they carried forward the work which they had begun. No churches were left without public worship because there was no ordained minister to conduct it. The laity was expected to continue to build upon the foundation which their public teachers had laid.

#### EXAMPLES OF PRIMITIVE LAY WORKERS.

In a number of instances, the apostle Paul has made honorable mention of lay workers, both men and women, who rendered faithful and important service in this direction. He does not hesitate to share with them the honor of the success of the Gospel as he was permitted to preach it. He says: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus." "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord."\* Again he says: "I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose

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\*Rom. xvi., 3, 12.

names are in the book of life."\* He speaks of them as fellow laborers, and upon some of them he confers immortal honor by his recognition in his Epistles of their faithful and efficient labors. Paul knew very well that if his labors were to be largely successful he must be sustained in them by the believers whom he had been instrumental in bringing into the church. And what was true of Paul is true to-day of every pastor and evangelist. Great results from public preaching of the cross are witnessed only as "all the Lord's people are 'prophets.'"

#### CONSEQUENCES OF THE DECADENCE OF LAY WORK.

As it was to the co-operation and support of the laity that the marvelous growth of the primitive church was largely due, so it was to the gradual discontinuance of this work and the increased limiting of Christian service to the clergy that the decadence and spiritual power of the church of the first centuries is to be attributed. This decrease and final discontinuance of the work of the laity were both a cause and an effect of the spiritual darkness by which the church of the early centuries of the Christian era began to be over-shadowed, and in which Romanism had its rise and early development. In proportion as the work of the laity was diminished, the power and importance of the clergy were in-

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\*Phil. iv., 3.

creased and in the continuance of this process vital godliness became practically extinct and the domination of the Romish hierarchy was established. This reign of spiritual death was intercepted only by the coming of the Protestant reformation.

#### REVIVAL OF PRIMITIVE SIMPLICITY AND PURITY.

In a degree the reformation was a return to the methods of the primitive church. Not only in the preaching of the Gospel, but also in the methods of lay work it was a revival of primitive doctrines and usages. It awakened the laity to some sense of their personal obligations as disciples of Christ and as members of his church. It was a restoration of the spirit of the individualism of the early church which under the power of Rome had practically been lost. But this revival, important and far-reaching in its influence as it was, was a very imperfect reformation. It was the beginning of a movement in the right direction, and this movement has gained momentum as the spirit of Protestantism has been strengthened and developed. But Protestantism, even at its best, is far from the position of the primitive church. The great need of the church at the opening of the twentieth century is a revival that will bring it back to a full and hearty adoption, not only of the spirit but also of the methods and usages of apostolic times. In the departure from this, the church has

lost her power with God and with men and it will be regained only by a sincere and unreserved return to the simplicity and purity of the age of the apostles.

The following words of an eloquent evangelical writer are deserving of very serious consideration: "Under the preaching of Bunyan and Baxter and Flavel of the seventeenth century, and of Wesley and Whitefield, Doddridge and Edwards, the Erskines and Tennent and others of the eighteenth, this tendency toward independent and earnest effort on the part of professing Christians was greatly stimulated; and since then there have been found in the churches not a few who have addressed themselves, in the spirit of primitive times, to the work of the Lord. Their number, however, has not proportionately kept pace with the increase of the avowed disciples of Christ; and practically the great principle of individual responsibility for the conversion of souls remains yet to be generally recognized. Practically there needs to be a second reformation from Popery. Protestantism itself in this regard needs to be reformed."\*

Fifty years ago it was estimated by judicious and intelligent men that not more than one-fifth of all the members of the Protestant Churches add anything to their spiritual power or to their efficiency in Christian work. From the nature of the case any

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\*Rev. Henry C. Fish, D.D., in *Prim. Piety Revived*, page 201.

estimate of this nature is a matter of conjecture, but if it was approximately correct at the middle of the nineteenth century it is quite too high at the opening of the twentieth. If at that time one member in five was a spiritual force, the estimate of one in ten, at the present is not too high. It is true that the church of the present affords some bright examples of faithfulness and earnestness in Christian work. But as has been well said: "The very prominence of such individuals is proof of the inactivity of those around them."

Make use of me, my God!  
Let me not be forgot,  
A broken vessel cast aside,  
One whom thou needest not!

All things do serve thee here,  
All creatures, great and small:  
'Make use of me, of me, my God,'  
The weakest of them all!



## CHAPTER V.

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# THE WORK OF THE LAITY A NECESSITY.

"The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."—Matt. ix., 37, 38.



## THE WORK OF THE LAITY A NECESSITY.

### THE NECESSITY OBVIOUS.

THE necessity of lay work in the effort to evangelize the world is so obvious as to admit of no question. A moment's attention to the subject must convince any thoughtful mind that if the world is ever to be won to Christ the work, to a great extent must be performed by the laity. A time must come when "all the Lord's people" will have recognized their calling as "prophets." If the preaching of the cross is to continue through all the future to be limited to an ordained ministry, the millennium will never dawn. Of itself, or in its direct and personal labors the ministry is altogether inadequate to this work.

### THE MINISTRY RELIGIOUS TEACHERS.

As a class or in their official ministrations their labors, to a great extent, are necessarily devoted to the instruction of their people; and in this service they reach a small proportion only of the adult population of those lands which, already, are nominally Christian. The great work of the ministry is that of *teaching*. Their commission runs: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." If it is said that to teach, as the word is here used, means to "disciple" or to "evangelize" the reply is that, in the main

this is to be accomplished by teaching. For it is added, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."\* The proper work of the ministry is performed by teaching the Gospel from the sacred desk. Ministers are set apart as religious teachers; and in order that they may fully and effectively discharge this duty, they are educated as such. They receive a literary and professional training for this service.

It is not the design of these words to teach that ministers are under no obligation to perform personal work. The warnings and invitations of the pulpit ought to be followed with personal appeals to the impenitent by the pastor. As far as possible the faithful pastor keeps himself informed in regard to the spiritual state of all his hearers. He knows when there is an especial call for direct personal labor; and the successful pastor is permitted to rejoice in the fruit of his labor in this direction. Under the ordinary services of the sanctuary the mass of the conversions are due, under God, to the following of the sermon by a personal interview with an interested hearer, on the part of the pastor. Where there is a lack of success in winning souls, where a pastorate is barren of saving results, one of the reasons may be a failure to follow the ministrations of

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\*Matt. xxviii., 19, 20.

the house of God by faithful and earnest personal work. Pastors as well as laymen have much to learn from the methods of the primitive church. The apostles and primitive evangelists were not mere preachers. They did not regard their work as done when they had addressed a congregation. They followed this by direct personal labor. With all confidence Paul reminds the elders of Ephesus how he had taught their people "publicly and from house to house."\* To this direct personal contact with the people of Ephesus doubtless even more than to his great power as a preacher, Paul owed his success in the gathering of this great church. To the importance of this work on the part of ministers every successful pastor and evangelist can bear testimony. It is said of Mr. Moody that in his evangelistic work he was impatient to get through with the public services that he might reach the unconverted in direct personal conversation. But when all this is said, it remains true that the great power of the ministry is that of the public preaching of the Gospel. The strength of the pastor is to be spent in this service.

#### THE CHRISTIAN TRAINING OF THE LAITY.

A very important part of the work of the ministry is that of preparing the membership of the churches for their work. It is only as pastors are thorough

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\*Acts xx., 20.

and faithful teachers of the great doctrines of the Gospel system that their people are fitted for intelligent and efficient Christian service. It is the calling of ministers to educate their people for the Master's work. It is a part and by no means an unimportant part of their duty to prepare the membership of their churches to take up the Gospel message, as it is delivered from the sacred desk, and bear it to those who are beyond its reach. The most useful pastors are those who are most successful in educating their people for faithful and efficient service as Christian workers, and in securing their co-operation and support. They are those who understand something of the importance of this co-operation and have some just conception of their calling as leaders of the sacramental host. They are men who know how to organize the spiritual forces at their command and to give them wise direction in their service.

It is said of John Wesley that he attributed the great success of the movement of which he was at the head, to the hearty co-operation of his followers. Of their work he said: "They were all at it, and always at it. Each new adherent was not only set to work but kept at work." It was his ability to awaken the interest and enthusiasm of his people and to impress them with a sense of their obligation as servants of Christ, and his skill in marshaling his

forces, more than his eloquence and power as a preacher that enabled him to lay the broad and deep foundations of the movement with which his name is associated. And what was true of Mr. Wesley in a pre-eminent degree has been true to a greater or less extent of the most successful pastors of all denominations. The most faithful pastor in this regard whom the writer has known was the late Rev. James Judson Buck, for many years pastor of Presbyterian Churches at Hunter and Jewett, New York. It was his usage to visit all the members of his congregation, whether communicants or non-communicants, and to hold conversation with them in regard to their spiritual interests. If he visited a family he expected all the members of it to be assembled, and when assembled, he talked to each one in particular. Having done this he closed the interview with the reading of the Scriptures and prayer. And this he did at frequent intervals. It is not every pastor who could successfully adopt his method but with him it was an ideal method. He inspired his people with profound reverence for his character as a minister and he was permitted to rejoice in seeing many of them brought to Christ.

#### THE CO-OPERATION OF PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

Before the world will be brought to Christ, the two classes must be brought to hearty co-opera-

tion in this work. Ministers must no longer be mere preachers, in the sense of preparing and delivering sermons from the pulpit. They must educate their people for the work of Christ, and become their leaders and guides in their efforts to win the unconverted to his service. And the laity must learn to take up the message of the sacred desk and convey it to the families and to the individuals that are either standing aloof from the ministrations of the sanctuary or are living beyond the sphere of its influence. It is only in this manner that the mass of the unregenerate will ever be brought to Christ. To human view, the ministry, not only is at present, but also must continue to be, too small a force to reach the perishing millions of the race.

#### NO PROVISION FOR THE MASSES.

That the world will not be subdued to Christ by the pulpit alone will appear if we consider the inadequacy of the ministry as a religious force, even in the most favored of Christian lands. If every house of worship in the United States were provided with a preacher and filled to its utmost capacity with hearers, a small proportion only of the people of the country would be reached by the pulpit. The mass would still be without the Gospel. Even in the cities where the religious element is supposed to be most influential and where the masses are most accessible,



the sittings of the churches are altogether inadequate to their accommodation. But this is by no means the most serious aspect of the case. Inadequate as this provision is at the best, the sittings of the churches are to a great extent unoccupied. Many of the churches are without the stated ministrations of the word for a considerable proportion of the time and where their doors always stand open the seats are by no means uniformly filled.

In this country no statistics in regard to church attendance that are at all exact or definite are obtainable. The churches with the exception of the Roman Catholic, publish the number of their communicants but do not give the number of the families or individuals who constitute their congregations. Our sole reliance is upon estimates sometimes based upon a counting of a number of congregations for a single service. But on whatever principle the estimates are based they only approximate the facts. There is, however, a rule for estimating the number of stated hearers of the Gospel which though not exact or definite is not very far from correct. If the churches are taken as a body, it will be found that the number of stated hearers is about the same as that of the communicants. In many instances the attendance is larger than the membership and in others it is considerably smaller, but taken as a whole it will be found that the difference is not very large.

But if we accept the statistics as essentially correct and include everything that can be called Christian it will appear that not less than three-fourths of the population of this Heaven-favored land are either without the Gospel or are living in deliberate neglect of it. The system of Gospel work, under which the churches are carrying forward their operations, reaches barely one-fourth of our people.

#### THE PICTURE NOT WHOLLY DARK.

It may be admitted that dark as this picture appears the statistics of the present as compared with those of the past, present some ground of encouragement. Imperfect as the system is the church has made progress under its operation. The membership of the churches is much larger to-day, in proportion to the entire population of the country than it was at the opening of the nineteenth century, or even fifty years since. This is true of the best element of the American church. It is true of the denominations which are most thoroughly evangelical in their theological teaching as well as most earnest and aggressive in their church work. The evangelical and spiritual element has increased more rapidly than the formal and liberal. At the middle of the past century less than one-sixth of the population of the country was included in the membership of the churches, or in the attendance upon the public ministrations of the

Gospel; at the beginning of the century the proportion was considerably smaller.

But accepting these figures as only proximately correct, putting upon them the most favorable construction that is possible and availing ourselves of all the encouragement that they afford, what are we to infer in regard to the evangelization of the world, or even of our own country. Obviously this: *If the world is to be brought under the influence of the Gospel, or if the masses of our own land are to be brought to Christ at any period of the near future, to a great extent the work must be done by the laity.* The members of the churches, men and women, must begin at once to obey the injunction of their divine Master: "Let him that heareth say, Come." They must unite with the ministry in an earnest effort to arrest the attention of the careless and to bring them to Jesus. In a direct personal service they must take up and convey to all within their reach the invitations of the pulpit. All the Lord's people must become prophets. Every disciple of Jesus in his or her own sphere must become a preacher of the Gospel. The members of the church must become in fact what they already are in theory and by profession, servants of Christ and laborers in his harvest. They must gird on the Gospel armor and go forth in earnest in this service. They must enter upon it with the conviction that their labor is essential to the success of the Gospel,—that the es-

establishment of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the waste places of Zion is mainly dependent upon their fidelity and earnestness. They must become enthusiasts in this work.

As we have already said there must be a hearty co-operation of the ministry and the laity. Each class must uphold and strengthen the other. Without the co-operation of his people the ablest and most faithful pastor will accomplish comparatively little, and the members of the churches in their work, need the constant counsel and guidance of wise and judicious pastors. The experience of each class should be in a high degree helpful to the other. The efficient lay worker obtains access where the pastor is excluded and he is enabled to furnish information of the highest value in the pastor's work. Each class performs a work which is quite beyond the sphere of the other and each should be animated by an inspiring and contagious earnestness and enthusiasm. With the universal, or even general prevalence of this spirit the triumphs of the cross would be multiplied beyond anything of which the church of the present has any conception; and the universal reign of Christ would be a question only of a very brief period.

Suppose that every member of the evangelical churches of the world were to be instrumental in the conversion of one soul each year; how soon would the last wanderer be brought into the fold? Or, to

bring the matter nearer home, suppose that each member of the evangelical churches of this country should be instrumental in bringing one soul only into the Kingdom of Christ every year; how soon would the world be converted? It is probable that the membership of the evangelical churches of the United States numbers at least twenty millions. Now if each of these should bring one soul to Christ every year and the converts should at once join in the work with the same result, *in less than three years* every sinner in the land old enough to accept the Gospel would be converted, and in less than seven years, without any aid from the Christians of other lands, the entire population of the globe would be brought into the Kingdom of Christ.

But is this too much to expect? Is it unreasonable to anticipate that on an average the converts to the churches, every year should equal the membership? Does this involve a greater degree of earnestness and devotion to our work than Christ requires? It is plain that without something of this earnestness and efficiency on the part of the laity, the world is not to be converted during the twentieth century. Is it not equally plain that if the converted members of the churches could be aroused to some adequate sense of their responsibility as disciples of Christ and of the momentous importance of the work to which he is calling them, the world could be saved by the gen-

eration now on the stage? Has any believer a doubt in regard to his call? Is there ground for doubt as to what Christ would have his people do? Is there any reason to question his willingness to send the Spirit in such measure as shall accomplish the work? If the path of duty is plain, how is the laborer, now standing idle, to meet the record of his refusal to respond to the Master's call? How is he to answer for his neglected opportunities?

## CHAPTER VI.

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# METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."—Luke xiv., 23.





## METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

### THE QUESTION SUGGESTED.

As the sincere and earnest believer comes to recognize the call to Christian service, the question at once arises in his mind, How am I to discharge this obligation? In what manner shall I address myself to this work? How would Christ have me say "Come," or how "compel them to come in"?

There is sometimes a certain willingness to discharge this duty accompanied by a sense of inability to do it in an acceptable manner, or of a lack of knowledge of the best manner of presenting the Gospel invitation. Many with some conviction of duty and with a degree of willingness to discharge it, under this apprehension do nothing in this service. Their lips are closed through the fear that they may make a mistake and thus do harm instead of good. Since then one method may be better than another the question is pertinent and not without importance. But where there is a zeal for Christ and for souls that is according to knowledge there is little danger of a serious mistake in the manner of discharging the duty. The great danger is that of altogether neglecting it.

### THE GENERAL ANSWER

To this question is: Say "Come" in your own way. In the discharge of this duty, make no man your pat-

tern. Let your own individuality appear. Act yourself. Present the invitation in the manner that is natural to you. If you are no larger than the boy David, do not put on Saul's armor. This is the Scriptural method and this is essential to the largest success. The form of the invitation is by no means important. No stereotyped method has been presented or practiced by successful workers. So far as relates to form and manner you are left to a large liberty. They should be such as are demanded by the peculiar character and circumstances of the persons who are to receive the invitation. God has given to his people a great diversity of talents and placed them in widely differing circumstances, and this diversity should give direction to their Christian service. Of necessity and in accordance with the fitness of things, one will present the invitation in one form and manner and another will present it in a very different form and manner.

#### COMMON SENSE AND TACT.

While you say "Come" in your own way, you have need of all the common sense and tact at your command. Let your prudence and discretion appear in seeking and in seizing a favorable opportunity to approach the unconverted. Do it in such a manner and in the use of such words as not to wound and thus to repel them. Bear in mind that the end in

view is not simply the discharge of your duty and thus the delivering of your own soul, but the winning of a soul to Christ, and let everything that can possibly conflict with this object be studiously avoided. Whatever may be the circumstances or the form of the invitation, let your manner and your words be redolent of the Spirit of your Master. Let your manner of approaching them give expression to your zeal for Christ and to your solicitude for their salvation. The manifestation of unfeigned Christian love, of a deep and tender interest in their spiritual well-being, touches the heart and wins to Christ where the most conclusive and convincing argument altogether fails. Without the manifestation of this grace, no degree of learning, or of worldly wisdom, will accomplish the end. Not the most fitly chosen, the most eloquent or the most persuasive words have any attracting power. In the presenting of this invitation, the one thing in the form that is vital, the one thing without which we may not look for saving results, is the breathing of sincere and tender Christian love.

#### AN ESPECIAL PREPARATION

We have seen that the preparation for effective Christian work comes of waiting upon God in believing and earnest prayer. But aside from the general and habitual cultivation of this spirit there is an es-

pecial preparation required for each particular service. If you would approach your impenitent friend or neighbor in such a spirit as to win him to Christ, let your heart be warmed for the occasion by special prayer in his behalf, and by a special plea for divine wisdom and guidance for yourself. Seek in his behalf the special influences of the Spirit that his heart may be prepared to receive your message and cultivate in your own heart the conviction that his conversion is the work of God and that you are only the instrument through which he may be brought to Christ. Let it never be forgotten that, though the invitation may be extended by the ability and zeal of a Paul, or by the eloquence of an Apollos, God alone can give the increase.

But while specific forms of presenting the invitation have not been prescribed by the Scriptures and the believer is left to a large discretion in his manner of conducting his work, there are some common methods of discharging this duty of which it may be profitable to be reminded. In the order of time the first of these is that of saying, "Come" by

#### CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN<sup>1</sup> LIVING.

Under this form the Gospel invitation may be extended by every disciple of Christ. In this manner at least all may preach the Gospel. All who hear the Gospel may say, "Come." Whatever diversity there

may be in their gifts, in their character or circumstances, all who love the Lord Jesus may unite in the effort to win sinners by this method. All who are animated by the Spirit of their Master possess the requisite gifts and they are all, alike, subject to the obligation. However feeble the intellectual powers of any may be, however humble his station in this manner, at least he may be a preacher of Christ, continually "holding forth the word of life."\*

Whatever else Christ may require of those to whom he has imparted special gifts he looks to all his disciples for this form of service. He expects every believer to be a consistent witness for him. He has made it the duty of all to bear consistent and unequivocal testimony to his character as a divine Saviour and to their own character as renewed men and women. He expects them to show to the world by a well ordered life and a godly conversation that they are indeed and in truth, as well as by profession, subjects of the washing of regeneration and of the renewing of the Holy Ghost. And in this testimony they are effectually preaching Christ. In this manner they are saying, "Come" in the most impressive language at their command. It is according to the economy of divine grace to make large use of this method of preaching, in bringing sinners into the Kingdom of Christ.

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\*Phil. ii., 16.

This method of extending the invitations of the Gospel then is a matter of vital importance. In this manner every believer should bear a consistent testimony to the divine character of the Christian faith and to the reality of his own religious profession. His manner of living should be a constant holding forth of the word of life, that cannot be misunderstood. His positive and unequivocal testimony for Christ should leave those by whom he is surrounded in no doubt of the genuineness of his faith. This is of vital importance because it is impossible that in this regard he should occupy a neutral position. In this testimony he is either attracting sinners to the Saviour or he is repelling them from his service. He is regarded as bearing a very strong testimony either for or against the Gospel. What he says may have very little weight, but his manner of living is very carefully considered.

#### AN EFFECTIVE ARGUMENT.

Perhaps there is no other method of presenting the Gospel invitation that is so effective as this. It has convinced a multitude of the unbelieving after they have resisted every other argument with which they have been approached. Though they were able to resist the most eloquent and powerful appeals from the sacred desk and to remain unmoved under the strongest and most philosophical demonstrations of the divinity of the Gospel, they found no answer to the

argument of a godly life. With those who are in a position to feel its full force, this argument rarely fails to carry conviction. It is a form of the Gospel invitation that is seldom misunderstood and that cannot be altogether disregarded.

The history of Christian work abounds in illustrations of this truth. Lord Peterborough, a pronounced unbeliever, when he had been entertained by Fencelon, Archbishop of Cambray, was so charmed by the beauty and attractiveness of his piety that he said to him in parting, "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself."

An excellent minister, referring to his own conversion, said, "While I was yet a young and thoughtless man a pious deacon addressed me about my salvation. I was angry. My heart rose in bitterness against him. I reproached him, pointed out the inconsistencies of professing Christians, talked indeed like a madman, while my conscience was grinding me like a millstone. He bore it all with meekness, perfectly unmoved. If he had only given one retort, shown one angry feeling it would have relieved me. His Christian meekness was too much for me. I went into the woods, smarting with my wounds, fell under what he had said to me and went and asked his pardon."

A young professor of religion, in accepting an invitation for an evening's entertainment, found herself most unexpectedly in a company where all were en-

gaged in card-playing. She could not leave the circle or express her disapprobation of the unchristian mode of amusement. She could only sit quietly by herself, and lift a prayer for the dear friends round her. This she did, and departed for home at the close of the evening.

Years passed. The circumstance had nearly left her memory. One day a friend inquired, "Do you remember being present at an evening party when all but yourself were engaged in card-playing? You sat silently by, saying nothing on the subject, but refusing to participate in the game. ——— was among the guests. Your silent disapprobation smote her heart, and was the means of her conversion. She died in the hope of a joyful resurrection."

We are either scattering abroad or gathering in the great harvest-field of souls. A word, a look, an apparently unimportant act, may effect the eternal interests of a young inquirer who is looking to you for example. It is easily known whether we are reluctantly present, or hankering after follies and amusements which our position in the church prevents our enjoying.\*

The following incident, though it has been widely published and is familiar to many, contains a valuable lesson to the youth of the present generation:—

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\*Messenger.



"The daughter of an English nobleman was providentially brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. But her father sought by threats, by reading, and traveling in foreign countries and to places of fashionable resort, to divert her mind from things unseen and eternal; but her heart was fixed. At last he resolved upon a final and desperate expedient, by which his end should be gained. A large company of the nobility were invited to his house; it was so arranged that during the festivities the daughters of different noblemen, and among others this one, were to be called to entertain the company with songs and music. If she complied, she forfeited her good conscience, and returned to the world; if she refused compliance, she would be publicly disgraced, and lose, beyond the possibility of recovery, her place in worldly society. It was a dreadful crisis, but with peaceful confidence did she await it. At last her name was announced. All were in suspense to see how the scale of destiny would turn. Without hesitation she arose, and with a calm and dignified composure took her place at the instrument. After a moment spent in silent prayer, she ran her fingers across the keys, and then with much sweetness, elevation, and solemnity, sung, accompanying her voice with the notes of the instrument, the following stanzas:—

"No room for mirth, or trifling here,  
For worldly hope, or worldly fear,  
If life so soon be gone;  
If now the Judge is at the door,  
And all mankind must stand before  
The inexorable throne.

"No matter which my thoughts employ,  
A moment's misery or joy,  
But oh! when both shall end,  
Where shall I find my destined place?  
Shall I my everlasting days  
With fiends or angels spend?

"Nothing is worth a thought beneath,  
But how I may escape the death  
That never, never dies;  
How make mine own election sure,  
And when I fail on earth, secure  
A mansion in the skies.

"Jesus, vouchsafe a pitying ray,  
Be thou my Guide, be thou my way  
To glorious happiness!  
Ah! write my pardon on my heart,  
And whensoever I hence depart,  
Let me depart in peace."

"The minstrel ceased—the solemnity of eternity was upon that assembly. Without speaking they dispersed. The father wept aloud, and when left alone sought the counsel and prayers of his daughter for the salvation of his soul. His soul was saved, and his great estate consecrated to the Saviour."

Jesus can help the weakest of his followers to witness a good confession.\*

The Rev. J. A. James, an eminent and greatly useful minister of Birmingham, England, in one of his lectures says: "If the present lecturer has a right to consider himself a real Christian,—if he has been of any service to his fellow creatures, and has attained to any usefulness in the Church of Christ, he owes it, in the way of means and instrumentality, to the sight of a companion who slept in the same room with him, bending his knees in prayer on retiring to rest. The scene so unostentatious and yet so unconcealed aroused my slumbering conscience and sent an arrow to my heart; for though I had been religiously educated, I had restrained prayer and cast off the fear of God. My confession to God followed and soon afterwards my entrance upon college studies for the work of the ministry. Nearly half a century has rolled away since then, with all its multitudinous events; but that little chamber, that humble couch, that praying youth are still present to my imagination and will never be forgotten even amidst the splendors of heaven and through the ages of eternity." How strong the encouragement presented by these words, to faithful witnessing for Christ by consistent godly living. It we are tempted

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\*British Evangelist.

to the neglect of any known duty, let us habitually remember that the eye of God and the eyes of the world are ever upon us and that in our acts we are continually bearing testimony either for or against our religion.

Justice McLean, of Ohio, heard a minister preach. He had been a skeptic, and this minister spoke to him in such a way as convinced him of the truth of the Christian religion. He was led to see how Christ had died for him, and was born again. He went home. He had hardly got there before he said: "We are going to have family prayer; let us go into the drawing room and pray together." "But," said his wife, "there are four lawyers in there; they have come to attend court. Let us go to the kitchen to have prayers." Judge McLean replied: "It's the first time I ever invited the Lord to my house, and I don't propose to invite him to the kitchen by any means." He went in to those lawyers, and said: "My friends, I have found out Jesus died on the cross for me. I have given myself to him, and now I propose to invite him to my house. You may do as you please, stay or go. But I am now to make my first prayer in my own house." They said they would like very much to stay, and did stay. From that day Judge McLean lived a consistent Christian life, and died a Christian death.\*

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\*Hammond.

The Christian, wherever he is seen,—in the street, in the drawing-room, at table, in prison, or at the height of greatness,—should always inspire others with the opinion that he is a man seeking God, intent upon advancing the great interests of humanity, and who thinks it is not worth living for any thing but to glorify God, and make all his successes and all his reverses contribute to that end; who is ready to leave this world as soon as his work in this respect is accomplished; and, like his Master, goes about doing good. O, how holy, how happy, would such a Christian be, free from covetousness, from envy, from anxiety, and all that can disturb the soul! Walking always with God how he would make the gospel honored! How victoriously would he put to silence gainsayers! And how many more souls would he bring to his Saviour, by the humble influence of a holy life, than by the most powerful language!\*

#### AN INCONSISTENT LIFE.

While a consistent example is ever powerful for good, an inconsistent manner of living is no less powerful for evil. Those under the Gospel who, in a degree, are convinced of their duty but are making the infirmities of professing Christians an excuse for their continued impenitence and unbelief, consti-

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\* A. Monod.

tute a great multitude. While it may be conceded that they are an excuse only, never a reason, we do well to bear in mind that as our consistent testimony may win them to Christ, so our evil example may be instrumental in confirming them in the way of sin and death.

Lord Byron writes: "I date my first impressions against religion from having witnessed how little its votaries were actuated by true Christian charity."

D. O. Gordon, of Hull, England, who, for a long period, was addicted to infidel principles, when, subsequently to his conversion, he was asked what was his chief hindrance in embracing the truth, replied: "The inconsistencies of professing Christians."

It has been well said: "The Christian, very frequently, is the only Bible that the world can be induced to read." How sad that the copy should be so defaced!

Every faithful pastor and every earnest Christian worker has learned something by experience of the extent of the power of this obstacle to the progress of the Gospel. In their approaches both to the humble and to the exalted they encounter this excuse. The imperfections and shortcomings of the members of the church are constantly presented as an apology for continued impenitence and unbelief.

## AN ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

This method of presenting the Gospel invitation is of vital importance because it constitutes an essential preparation for presenting it in any other form. In whatever form it may be presented, it is essential to its success that our manner of living should furnish evidence that we are authorized to extend it. If we would win souls to Christ in any manner we must first show the genuineness of our faith. As long as our professions are contradicted by our lives our labors for Christ will be essentially in vain. Our actions are always understood by the world as expressing our real convictions. Whatever we may say, our actions are always accepted as the true expression of the sentiments of our hearts. The uniform course of life is ever regarded as the true exponent of the secret character. Hence where our professions are contradicted by our lives, the testimony of our lives is accepted and our professions are disregarded. We shall accomplish very little then in winning souls, unless the Gospel invitation is sustained by a consistent example.

## GOSPEL INVITATION BY PUBLIC ADDRESS.

The church of this country embodies a vast amount of latent and unconsecrated talent for Christian service in this direction. It contains a very

numerous class of laymen who are endowed with a capacity more or less marked, for addressing a public audience and who have not recognized a call to the ministry. Of these, there are many who have received a thorough intellectual discipline and who possess gifts as public speakers of a high order. There are many others who, without special gifts or attainments in this direction, are nevertheless men of reading and intelligence and of a good practical knowledge of the Scriptures; and who are in command of sufficient confidence and readiness of speech to render them acceptable to any ordinary congregation. On occasion persons of these classes are accustomed to speak in public in a professional, political or business capacity and many of them are constantly called out in the social meetings of the church. In this service they demonstrate their ability and acceptance as public speakers. But in most instances this is the extent of their labors and of their usefulness in this direction.

It may be conceded that in many if not in most instances, the responsibility for the failure of these classes to devote their talents more largely to the service of Christ is with the pastors and officers of the churches. If there is not disapproval of this form of Christian work, there is carelessness or indifference in regard to it. There is no method, no plan for the employment of the lay talent of the church,—pastor



and people have lapsed into a routine service. The forms of stated public worship are maintained, and though, too frequently, they are little more than forms, this is the sum of the work of the church. Just here undoubtedly, a very grave responsibility rests upon the church in its organized capacity. This is one of the points, if not the first, at which the forward movement of the twentieth century,—of which so much is now said and so little done,—should begin. Pastors and church officers should be, not simply teaching and ruling elders, but leaders in aggressive Christian work. They should be organizers and directors of the spiritual forces of the congregation. An army without proper control and guidance is simply a mob. It is dangerous, not to the enemy but to the power that has called it into being. And a church left to itself, left without organization or direction as an evangelizing power is only one removed from such a body. It is not supposable that it can have any proper efficiency in Christian work. If the church is ever to accomplish the work to which it is called of God there must be a reformation in this regard. There must be a system or plan of aggressive evangelical service that will include the entire body. The members of the church must be set to work, and kept at work. Pastors and church officers must see to it that, as Mr. Wesley has expressed it, "They are all at it, and always at it."

## RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LAITY.

While the lukewarmness and indifference of the leaders of the church may constitute an apology, it cannot be accepted as a justification of the laity in their neglect of Christian service. Every believer whether of the ministry or of the laity is directly responsible to God for the use of his talents. Every layman, as we have seen, receives his commission directly from the inspired Word; and for the manner in which he discharges the obligation which it imposes, he is to give account, not to the church but to his Master. The capacity for addressing a public audience, is a talent which like every other is to be consecrated to the divine service and employed for the divine glory. And the layman is no less responsible for the use of this gift than the minister. Whatever may be the measure of his gifts, all are to be consecrated to his Master's service,

## THE FIELD OF THE LAY PREACHER.

If the talents of the laity in this direction were thoroughly consecrated to the work of Christ and employed as they might be by the pastors and officers of the churches, it would be impossible to overestimate the value and importance of their service. Within the bounds of almost every parish, whether in the city or in the country, there are places where a congregation can be gathered that would welcome

the labors of an intelligent and pious layman. The places of this character that cannot be reached by pastors, and where it is impracticable to establish a church or to support an ordained minister are practically without number. Such places constitute the proper parishes of the lay preachers. They must be reached by laymen or remain unoccupied. Without this form of evangelistic labor, they must remain in the future what they have been in the past. To human view the people of these districts must continue to live without hope and to die without a Saviour. For this condition the churches to which these districts are contiguous will be held responsible. God has given these churches the power to occupy such fields, and for their use of the talents with which he has entrusted them they must one day give account.

#### LAY PREACHING A SCRIPTURAL METHOD.

Obviously this method of propagation of the Gospel is in accord with the economy of Divine Grace. It is the plan of God that the ministrations of the pulpit shall be supported by the preaching of the laity. In the injunction of our Lord: "Let him that heareth say, Come," it is clearly implied that those who hear the divine message in the sanctuary are to take it up and convey it to the multitude that is beyond the reach of the pulpit. And though this method of ex-

tending the invitation has not been prescribed the capacity to address a public audience clearly implies the obligation to be a preacher in this sense. The imparting of the talent carries with it the obligation to make use of it. It is given with the injunction: "Occupy till I come."\* It is to be used by all who have received it until their Lord shall call his servants before him to ascertain how much every man has gained "by trading."

It is altogether plain from the New Testament that this method of disseminating ~~the~~ Gospel constituted a very important part of the work of the primitive church. The evangelistic labors of the Apostles and the pastoral work of the men whom they ordained as ministers of particular churches were largely supported by lay preachers. Apollos and Priscilla and Aquila are noted examples of the lay preachers of the primitive churches. It is possible that in his maturer years, Apollos was ordained to the ministry, but long before he had ever seen an apostle and while he had yet but a very imperfect understanding of the Gospel system, he had become an effective and eminent lay preacher,† while Priscilla and Aquila distinguished themselves by their work in connection with that of the Apostle Paul. He writes of them as his "helpers in Christ Jesus \* \* \* unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.‡"

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\*Luke xix., 13. †Acts xviii., 24-28. ‡Rom, vi., 3-5.

Of those members of the Church at Jerusalem who were "scattered abroad," and "went everywhere preaching the word," it is to be presumed that there were many preachers of this class. While many preached only as Jesus preached to Nicodemus, or to the woman of Samaria, others were enabled to avail themselves of any opportunity that presented of addressing in a more formal manner a public assembly, or any gathering of people.

#### MODERN EXAMPLES OF LAY PREACHING.

Some striking examples of the value and importance of this method of lay preaching, are presented by the history of the church of a recent period. Of the Wesleyan Church in England about the middle of the nineteenth century a statistician affirms that it had "twenty thousand preachers, and class leaders, not belonging to the ministerial order." During the earlier period of the work of the different branches of the Methodist Church in this country, this method of evangelization was extensively employed. Whenever a layman developed a capacity for public speaking, he was licensed to exhort. This was not an induction to the ministry. Nor was it, necessarily, a preparatory step in that direction. It was simply an orderly recognition of his Christian character and of his capacity for the service of the church as a lay preacher. Under this license he was expected to

go to the outlying districts of the parish and hold public services in the school houses and in private residences as the opportunity presented. Though it was regulated by a license from the proper ecclesiastical authority it was simply a systematic and comprehensive method of reaching the entire section of country occupied by the church with lay preaching. In many instances at least a very important work was accomplished through this instrumentality. It was under the operation of this system that the Methodist churches enjoyed the largest measure of growth and prosperity. It is since the practical abandonment of this method of evangelistic work, that the complaint has arisen of a large decrease of conversions and additions to the churches. Under certain modifications this system, which appears to have originated with Mr. Wesley, has been adopted by other denominations and with very gratifying and important results.

#### THE WORK OF ONCKEN IN GERMANY.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of what may be accomplished by lay preaching is presented by the work of Johann Gerhard Oncken, an Anabaptist pastor of Germany, and his associates. In the early part of the past century a little band of seven believers whose hearts the Lord had touched, assembled in a shoemaker's shop, in the city of Hamburg and consecrating themselves to the service of Christ, organized

a church and chose Mr. Oncken as their pastor. The theory on which the movement was inaugurated was not that the pastor was to do the work for the church, but that he was to be the leader and director of a band of Christian workers.

On this idea they entered upon the work. Every member of the church if not a preacher was a witness and worker for Christ. As many as possessed the required gifts became preachers in the sense of exhorters in public assemblies. The result was more than could have been anticipated by the largest faith. Twenty years later the movement embraced fifty churches; the professed converts numbered ten thousand; fifty millions of people had heard the Gospel through this organization and eight millions of pages of tracts and four hundred thousand copies of the Scriptures had been circulated.

#### ONCKEN'S PLAN OF LAY WORK.

The method through which this work was accomplished in the use of these feeble instrumentalities is described by the pastor as follows:—"All our members are initiated and instructed into a regular system of operations. Every man and woman is required to do something for the Lord and thus the word of the Lord has been scattered. We have now about seventy brethren in Hamburg who go out every alternate Sabbath two by two, *preaching the Gospel*; and by this

means the whole of the city has heard the precious name of Christ." Again he says, "We think that all the talents in the church should be brought out. A list of the brethren who can speak is kept and they are sent to the villages to preach on the Sabbath, and they go out as the church directs."\*

From these words it appears that this pastor had adopted in its simplicity and in its fullness, the Gospel method of lay preaching, as set forth in the preceding pages. It will be observed that the men by whom this work was accomplished are not educated and ordained men, not professional or eloquent men, but simply "brethren who can speak," in other words lay preachers. In the faithful and earnest working of this Gospel system, we have the whole secret of his marvelous success. His people had no monopoly of gifts and there was nothing original in his system. He simply followed the instructions of the New Testament and the result was something of the success which attended the labors of the Apostles and primitive believers. But what was done by Oncken and his followers may be done and should be done according to the measure of their gifts and appointments, by all the churches of Jesus Christ. All that is needful to a share in their success is the adoption of this system in

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\*Quoted by Rev. Henry C. Fish, D.D., in "Primitive Piety Revived," page 216.



the exercise of something of their faith and of their devotion to the Master's work. As far as the church of the present day has departed, or has fallen away from the Gospel method of Christian work, the first step in the work of reformation, or in what in the language of the day is termed a "forward movement," should be a return to this method. It is only as we come back to the New Testament system and begin to work it out in something of the spirit of the primitive church that we shall ever witness the dawning of the latter day glory.

#### THE WORK OF EVAN ROBERTS.

A more recent example of successful lay evangelism is presented by the work of Evan Roberts of the Calvinistic Methodist Church of Wales. Mr. Roberts belongs to the class of lay workers. He is a class by himself. He was not the originator of the Welsh revival but was brought out as a lay evangelist by it. He is a product, one of the fruits of the great awakening. It has been well said that Roberts did not create the revival, but the revival created Roberts. Nevertheless his work is of such a character that it may be said to have constituted a very important, though not an essential element of the revival. The movement commenced without him and without doubt would have continued without him. And yet his work has everywhere been recognized as one of the feat-

ures of this extraordinary work of grace. Probably no ordained minister of any church in Wales has been instrumental, during the same period, in attracting so many sinners to the Cross.

Mr. Roberts strikingly illustrates the position that extraordinary intellectual gifts are not essential to success in lay evangelism. According to the accepted standard, he is not a great orator, or a great preacher, or even a great lay evangelist. His endowments so far as they are extraordinary, are strictly of a spiritual character. They are capacities that give him power with God and with men. They are gifts that enable him to reach the hearts of his hearers, and to attract them to the Saviour. There is something in the man, which, though it cannot be described, renders him mighty as a winner of souls. It is the gift of God and it has been imparted to him in a most extraordinary manner. Through this gift he has done and is still doing a great work for Christ and for his church.

By reason of his peculiar endowment Mr. Roberts is not, in all respects, an example to the ordinary lay evangelist. Doubtless it would be very unwise for other men to imitate his methods of lay work. But if it is not practicable for other men to do the same work that he is doing or to imitate his manner of conducting Christian work, he may be followed in his devotion to his Master, in his consuming zeal for the honor of God and for the saving of souls.

A minister from this country who visited Wales during the revival writes of Mr. Roberts' work as follows:

"He speaks with authority, with persuasion, with power and with tenderness. He imparts to all who hear him the smiling happiness reflected in his face and the gladness of his heart as he tells in tenderest words the sovereign mercy of the eternal God in the Gospel of his only-begotten and well-beloved Son made manifest and more glorious in the uplifted Cross which is the burden of Williams' great hymn. An eye-witness of the scenes at Pont-y-Cymmer writes that there was not a square foot of vacant ground space anywhere. People clambered up the rails of the pulpit, sat on the steps leading from one pew to another in the galleries. Women fainted, and some had to be carried out whilst Roberts was speaking. Others, who had come out of curiosity, had to go away because of lack of room. But he went along with the same tenderness reflected in face and voice, 'Don't take them out; don't take 'them out,' he pleaded. 'Let them ask for God's forgiveness; that is the sovereign remedy.' "



## CHAPTER VII.

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# METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

(Continued.)

"And he brought him to Jesus."—John i., 42.



## METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

### CONTINUED.

WHILE we are not to lose sight of the system of Christian work established by the primitive church, it is to be borne in mind that there are other methods which belong especially to the church of the present. Though some of them, at least, are not directly of divine appointment, they have grown out of, and have become a part of the modern plan of conducting the work of the church. And if they are not directly based upon any scriptural precept or usage, they are not in conflict with any Gospel teaching. Their value and importance have been attested by the experience of the church. It is too plain to be questioned that the divine blessing has attended the use of these methods and that through their instrumentality the unbelieving in large numbers have been brought to Christ. They have been employed by the most successful pastors and Christian workers. Among these methods, the first, perhaps, in importance is

### THE WORK OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

This work, though of comparatively recent origin has become practically universal among evangelical Protestant churches. And it may be safely said that no other uninspired method has been productive of so important results. The Sabbath school comes nearer than any other plan yet adopted by the modern

church, to reaching the mass of the people. The children of almost all classes are approachable through this agency. As a rule, even the immoral and the vicious are more than willing that their children should be gathered into the Sabbath school and taught the precepts and the principles of the Gospel. If the church were in any good degree true to its calling and to its profession almost every child within reach of the Sabbath schools of the land might be brought under their influence.

There is no other field in which the believer may labor with as strong confidence of success. Of all classes who are without the church, none is so susceptible to gracious influences as that of the children and youth. During this period the mind and heart are in a plastic state. The inclinations and affections are not fixed. The character is not yet established. The mind is open to religious influences, and they are far more approachable than in maturer years. They are more inclined to appreciate an interest in their spiritual welfare, and of all classes they are most readily led into the way of life.

This is not mere theory. It is a matter of history, that the mass of those who are brought into the church, are converted in early life. Comparatively few who have reached middle life in impenitence are ever brought to an open acceptance of the Saviour. At a meeting of Methodist ministers it was proposed



to inquire at what age each had made a profession of religion. The following was the result:—

Total number present.....	67
Converted between 12 and 14 years of age.....	26
Converted between 14 and 16 years of age.....	10
Converted between 16 and 18 years of age.....	14
Converted between 18 and 21 years of age.....	12
Converted after 21 years of age.....	5

In the facts presented by these figures there is nothing extraordinary or unusual. It is true, doubtless, that of those converted in childhood and early youth a larger proportion become ministers or active Christian workers than of those converted later, even though it may be in comparatively early life. But it is believed that the proportion of early conversions here given will prove true essentially of the mass of church members, except that as a rule, men converted later in life do not enter the ministry. In the case of this class, though the inclination may be present, the opportunity has been lost. "I once made an actual examination of this sort," says the late Rev. Dr. I. S. Spencer, "in respect to two hundred and fifty-three hopeful converts to Christ, who came under my observation at a particular period. Of these there were converted.

Under 20 years of age.....	138
Between 20 and 30 years of age.....	85
Between 30 and 40 years of age.....	22
Between 40 and 50 years of age.....	4
Between 50 and 60 years of age.....	3
Between 60 and 70 years of age.....	1

These figures, startling as they appear, may be taken as indicating, at least in a general sense, the ordinary period of conversion in the church at large. Peculiar circumstances, especially in relation to powerful revivals of religion may, in a degree, modify the rule deducible from these statistics. We may not set limits to the dispensation of divine grace. God is sometimes found of men who during the greater part of a long life have sought him not. But it is not to be questioned that the mass of those who become members of the churches are converted in early life.

#### THE WORK VITALLY IMPORTANT.

If the time allotted the church for saving the lost is even proximately in accord with the view here presented it is impossible to overestimate the importance of the Sabbath school work. If the masses are to be reached with the Gospel the work must begin with the children. And the fact that so large a proportion of the members of the churches have been converted in childhood, or early youth affords the strongest encouragement to labor in this direction. It shows that this is the great field on which the battle for Christ is to be fought. If this world is to be subdued to the Cross, the work is to be largely accomplished by the evangelization of the young. If we fail to reach the children comparatively little will be accomplished for persons of maturer years. But

if the children are brought to Christ, there will soon be small occasion to labor in behalf of adult sinners. The world will soon acknowledge Christ as King.

### A WORK FOR ALL.

In view of the considerations here presented the duty of the church is too plain to be questioned. Unless released by physical inability or some other providential hindrance every member of the church should find a place in the Sabbath school. Every Christian man and woman should recognize a personal responsibility to Christ in regard to this work. It is a department of Christian service, in which there is a place for all.

If this rule brings into the Sabbath school adults who are not needed as teachers, they may always find a place as pupils. In the Bible class or in other adult classes there is always room for another member. And there is no person but that has need to learn more of the Scriptures. But if there are any who can do no more let them at least encourage the work by their presence. Let them at least contribute the light of a Christian countenance. Such members hold up the hands of officers and teachers by the manifestation of an interest in their work. They magnify the importance of the work in the eyes of the children and youth. They encourage young men and women to continue their attendance. As many, then, as

really desire to be instrumental in winning souls should conscientiously improve this opportunity. They should be earnest and diligent in their efforts to increase the numbers and the interest of the Sabbath school.

#### A FIELD FOR REFORMATION.

Just here the church has great need of a general and thorough reformation. In the past, as at present, the rule is that the work of the Sabbath school depends upon a small minority of the members of the churches. In the main, the work is carried on by the faithful few, while the majority of the members altogether fail to recognize their obligation to bear a part in it. It is pleasant to note that there are some exceptions to this rule. There are a few churches, especially among the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, where the Sabbath school is coterminous with the congregation. Each Sabbath morning two sessions are held. In the one the congregation is organized for public worship, or as a worshipping assembly; in the other it is organized as a school for the study of the Holy Scriptures. Each assembly is composed of the entire congregation. The children and youth attend the public worship and the adults attend the Sabbath school. This is the ideal method. The public worship is for the children and youth, no less than for adults, and the Sabbath school is for adults no less than for the young. The faith-

ful working of this system bears its appropriate fruit. Nowhere else, perhaps, is there so large a proportion of the entire population brought into the church.

But the working of this method, instead of constituting an exception so marked as to attract wide attention, should be universal. In every evangelical church the congregation should constitute the Sabbath school. Every member of the church should recognize the obligation to contribute something to the success of this work. If this were done it would be easy to hold the impenitent members of the congregation and there would be no complaint that the young men and women were inclined to withdraw from the school.

#### A PIONEER AND MISSIONARY AGENCY.

Under all ordinary circumstances the work should not be limited to the church school. It is presumed that every church has a Sabbath school at its place of stated public worship. This is well, but this should not be the sum of its work in this direction. There are outlying districts contiguous to almost every church, whether in the city or the country, that present an inviting field for Sabbath school work. We have said that such districts constitute the proper parishes of the lay preachers. But where there is a call for a lay preacher there is a call for a Sabbath school. The two agencies should go together and

each should support and uphold the other. Even in the most favored sections of the country, there are places, not a few, where there is an absolute necessity for the adoption of these methods of Christian work. Unless they are employed a large class of people are left to a state of religious destitution. They are left to pursue the way of sin and death, without a word of warning or of instruction in regard to the way of life.

The responsibility of the church in regard to these outlying districts is too obvious to require either argument or explanation. God has laid upon it the obligation to give the Gospel to the people of these districts; and if it is withheld and they perish in their sin, their blood will be required of those whom he has called to this service. The command is: "Let him that heareth say, Come." Those who enjoy the privilege of hearing the Gospel message in the sanctuary are called to take it up and convey it to those who are beyond the reach of the pulpit. This is God's plan for giving the Gospel to these classes; and the church is true to her divine calling only as she is making an earnest effort to discharge this obligation.

#### THE CHIEF END OF THE WORK.

In a gathering of the children and youth into the Sabbath school and especially in the imparting of instruction from the Scriptures, the true lay evangelist

will ever keep the one great end of his work steadily in view; he will not forget that this is not the multiplying of numbers, not popularity, not entertainment, not the gratification of the pupil, but the saving of his soul. This is the true object of all Sabbath school instruction and the truth taught is adapted to this purpose. To Timothy Paul said: "And that from a child thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."\*

If we are disposed to undervalue the Old Testament Scriptures we do well to remember that we have here the testimony of an Apostle to its divine inspiration and to its saving power. The Scriptures by which Timothy was made wise unto salvation, were simply and solely the Old Testament. In his childhood, not a word of the New Testament had been written. The words of the Apostles leave us in no doubt of the design of God in giving us the Old Testament or of their adaptation to the end for which they were given. The Scriptures, whether of the Old or New Testament, are able by the divine blessing upon faithful instruction to make children "wise unto salvation." If the Sabbath school is maintained for any other purpose than this it is a mistake and can only result in a miserable failure. The true teacher en-

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\*2 Tim. iii., 15.

gages in his work with this end always in view. He does not forget that his pupils have been intrusted to his care that he may win them to Christ. He stands before them for this very purpose. It is for this special object that he has been called and commissioned for his work.

#### A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY.

The thoughtful teacher can hardly fail to be deeply impressed with the sense of the responsibility of his position. In the instruction of each returning Sabbath he is leaving an impression that is to abide not only during the life that now is, but also for that which is to come. In his serious moments he must recognize the possibility, at least, that under God, the salvation of his pupils may depend upon his fidelity. They may be saved or lost as he is faithful or unfaithful to their eternal interests.

They are intrusted to his care at a period at which they are forming a character for time and for eternity. In many instances the Sabbath school affords almost the only religious influence to which they are subject; they are under his care for only a limited period. If he is faithful to his trust he has reason to anticipate that they will be brought under the influence of the house of God, and established in a church-going habit; and that sooner or later they will be brought to Christ. But if he is careless and



indifferent and performs his work in a perfunctory and half-hearted manner, they are likely to lose their interest in the Sabbath school, and falling away from it soon pass beyond the reach of any religious influence. This is the history of a large class who for a time enjoy the instruction of the Sabbath school. There is something more than a possibility then, that their religious character, not only for the present life but also for an eternal future, may be such as he shall make it.

#### THE PRAYING TEACHER.

The consciousness of the responsibility which his work involves can hardly fail to lead the seriously minded teacher to earnest and importunate prayer. He can hardly fail of some befitting sense of his need of divine aid, and under this consciousness he cannot altogether neglect the offering of believing prayer in behalf of those for whom he labors. God has left his people in no doubt of his willingness to grant his blessing upon faithful Sabbath school labor, or to hear their prayer for the conversion of children and youth.

A lady of mature years bears this testimony: "When I was a child in the Sabbath school in the old country, my faithful teacher used to say: 'I have prayed too much for my class for one of them to be lost.' I was a thoughtless girl at the time and remember wondering at it, and thinking it a very self-confident remark. She was so sure. 'I shall have them all,'

she would say. 'I shall say to Christ at the judgment, "Here am I and the class thou hast given me."'" "And were they all converted?" she was asked. "Yes, she did not live to see it, but my eyes have seen it, the last of the sixteen gathered into the fold." The experience of this teacher was not peculiar and should not be deemed unusual. Undoubtedly it is the rule that faithful labor and earnest prayer in behalf of a Sabbath school class, results in the conversion of the pupils. The teacher should labor and pray in the confident expectation of this result.

The following incident is related by a missionary of the American Sunday School Union: "Two girls were walking in the cemetery of a western town, reading the inscriptions on the tombstones. Suddenly one of them stopped, her eyes resting on a large marble monument. She clasped her hands together, tears flowed from her eyes, and with trembling voice she said: 'Oh, Lizzie, here lies buried my old Sunday school teacher. She has been dead four years. Oh, how I wish I could see her now and tell her it was the Bible lessons she used to teach us and the stories of Jesus she used to tell us, that since her death led me to give my heart to Jesus.'" The good seed apparently may lie dormant, and give no indication of life, for a long period, but though the sower may not live to see it, in due season it will spring up and bear fruit to the glory of God and to the saving of the soul.

Another method by which the lay worker may say, "Come," is that of

#### BRINGING THE UNCONVERTED INTO THE SANCTUARY.

In every age of the church this method has been effectual to the saving of souls. The careless have been persuaded to attend public worship and in this they have been led to take the first step toward an acceptance of the Gospel. The pulpit is the great evangelizing power. It is God's chosen instrumentality for the saving of the lost. Perhaps the most important service that the lay worker can render his unregenerate neighbor is to induce him to become a habitual attendant upon the public service of the house of God. The utterances of the evangelical pulpit are the public invitations of the Gospel. They are the voice of God to lost men. And as they are the voice of God so are they the voice of the church. They are the voice through which the unconverted are called to forsake their sins and lay hold on everlasting life. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."\* The Holy Spirit and the church unite in calling upon sinners to accept Christ as their Saviour. If the lay worker can induce the unconverted who are living in neglect of the sanctuary to give this invitation a continued and serious hearing he accom-

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\*Rev. xxii., 17.

plishes a most important work. He has a right to anticipate that by the blessing of God upon the ministrations of the sanctuary, in answer to his prayer, the result of his work may be the saving of the soul. He has a right to hope that the pulpit may do what he has failed to accomplish by his personal work. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."\* The Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit" in the conversion of lost men. It is especially by "the foolishness of preaching," that it has pleased God to save them that believe.

This doctrine is sustained by the history of the church in every age. It is a matter of fact that the mass at least of those who are regular and constant in their attendance upon the true and faithful preaching of the Cross, are, sooner or later, brought to Christ. This is the great end for which the ordinances of the Gospel were instituted and they are adapted to its accomplishment. The preaching of the Cross is adapted to turn sinners to the Saviour. This is the will of God concerning it. He has provided for the preaching of the Gospel in order that through this instrumentality he may save the souls of the lost. He has adapted the means to the end and as a matter of fact they do accomplish his gracious purpose.

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\*Rom. x., 17.

It would be quite too much, doubtless, to say that all who place themselves under the preaching of the Gospel are brought to Christ. Many are occasional and at times regular attendants upon the stated means of grace to whom they are "a savor of death unto death." In themselves the ordinances of the Gospel have no saving efficiency. They have no inherent power to renew and sanctify the heart and there is a fearful possibility that the enjoyment of them by the unregenerate may immeasurably increase their final condemnation and ruin. Nevertheless, it is true that they are designed and adapted to the saving of the lost. They are the divinely appointed means of grace. It is also true that it is the experience of the church that as a rule, those who are constant and serious hearers of the Word are eventually brought to Christ. As many as "receive with meekness the engrafted word" find in a blessed experience that it "is able to save their souls."\*

If this be true it is obviously of the first importance to bring those who are living in neglect of Gospel privileges into the sanctuary. It is of the first importance that they should be persuaded to hear the preaching of the Cross. And, since they are not reached by the voice of "the Spirit and the Bride," as it is heard in the sanctuary, they must be brought in

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\*James i., 21.

by those that hear. To such, "let him that heareth say, Come." The message of the pulpit must be taken up by the occupants of the pews and conveyed to those who are living in neglect of it. They should be cordially and earnestly invited to the house of God and to the place of social prayer. With tender entreaty, if need be, they should be urged to place themselves under the influence of the means which God has ordained for their salvation. Constrained by the love of Christ, they must go out and "compel them to come in."

As an illustration of one of the many ways in which this invitation may be extended take the following incident: "The first three months of the year 1827," says an aged man, "when a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, I boarded in a company of about twenty gentlemen. One of them was a member of Dr. Lyman Beecher's Church, Hanover Street, Boston. This young man very politely invited one and another of the boarders to hear Dr. Beecher on Sabbath or at an evening lecture. Upon his invitation, one Sabbath, I went. He conducted me to an eligible pew near the pulpit, where I could see the whole congregation, comprising a great multitude of young men, who are the hope of the community. Dr. Beecher gave an excellent sermon from Jer. xvii., 19, 'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.' At the close of the

service the gentleman of the pew kindly said to me, 'Any time when you would hear Dr, Beecher, take a seat in my pew.'"

This is the spirit of the true disciple. The manifestation of this interest moves unregenerate men. If every professing Christian would habitually follow this example the churches would soon be filled to overflowing with interested and profited worshipers. Consistent and earnest labor in this direction alone would soon bring large numbers to Christ.

In many instances revivals have had their origin in work of this character or have been greatly promoted by it. Of an extensive and powerful work of grace under his labors in New York city, Mr. Finney says: "The church was a praying, working people. They were thoroughly united, were well trained in regard to labors for the conversion of sinners and were a most devoted and efficient church of Christ. They would go out into the highways and hedges and bring people to hear preaching, whenever they were called upon to do so. Both men and women would undertake this work. When we wished to give notice of any extra meetings, little slips of paper on which was printed an invitation to attend the services would be carried from house to house, in every direction, by the members of the church; especially in that part of the city in which Chatham Street Chapel, as we called it, was located.

By the distribution of these slips and by oral invitations, the house could be filled any evening in the week. Our ladies were not afraid to go and gather in all classes from the neighborhood round about."\*


There is a lesson in these words not only to evangelists and pastors in conducting special services, but, as well, to those who would increase the attendance upon the ordinary services of the sanctuary. It is a method of extending the Gospel invitation that may be profitably employed under any and under all circumstances. The following incident related in farther illustration of the active and hearty co-operation of the members of this church in his revival work is from the same pen: "The firm of Naylor and Company, who were at that time the great cutlery manufacturers in Sheffield, England, had a house in New York and a partner there by the name of H——. Mr. H—— was a worldly man, had traveled a great deal, and had visited several of the principal cities of Europe. One of the clerks of that establishment had come to our meetings and had been converted, and felt very anxious for the conversion of Mr. H——. For some time the young man hesitated about asking him to attend our meetings, but he finally ventured to do so; and in com-

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\*Memoirs of Rev. C. G. Finney, page 321.



pliance with his earnest entreaty, Mr. H—— came one evening to the meeting. As it happened he sat near the broad aisle, over against where Mr. Tappan sat. Mr. Tappan saw that during the service he manifested a good deal of emotion and seemed uneasy at times as if he were on the point of going out. Mr. H—— afterwards acknowledged to me that he was several times on the point of leaving because he was so affected by the sermon. But he remained till the blessing was pronounced. Mr. Tappan kept his eye upon him and as soon as the blessing was pronounced introduced himself as Mr. Tappan, a partner of Arthur Tappan & Company, a firm well known to everybody in New York. I have heard Mr. H—— himself relate the facts with great emotion. He said that Mr. Tappan stepped up to him and took him gently by the button of his coat, and spoke very kindly to him and asked him if he would not remain for prayer and conversation. He tried to excuse himself and to get away; but Mr. Tappan was gentlemanly and so kind that he could not well get away from him. He was importunate, and as Mr. H—— expressed it, 'he held fast to my button, so that an ounce weight at my button was the means of saving my soul.' The people retired and Mr. H—— among others was persuaded to remain. According to our custom we had a thorough conversation and Mr. H—— either then or very soon



after was hopefully converted.”\* There is much in this narrative that is instructive. The act of the young man was a manifestation of the spirit of the true convert and the earnest persuasion of the pious merchant was an illustration of the meaning of our Lord, in the words: “Compel them to come in.” In the conversion of this man there were four steps. 1. The invitation. 2. The sermon. 3. The words of Mr. Tappan, and 4. The meeting for conversation and prayer. If any one of these steps had been lacking, to human view, the others would have resulted in failure. But altogether it is a striking illustration of the importance of persuading the unconverted to hear the Gospel.

The men who are laboring effectively in revivals at the present day are in full accord in this regard with the great evangelist of the past. The Rev. Reuben A. Torrey, D.D., one of the most successful and distinguished evangelists of the twentieth century, emphasizes even more strongly than Mr. Finney the importance of individual evangelism. In his preaching he magnifies this department of revival work, and with great earnestness impresses upon believers their obligation to engage in it. He has no expectation of witnessing a comprehensive work of grace, a work that will reach the mass of the people, except

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\*Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney, page 322.

through the co-operation of the sacramental host of which he is the recognized leader. He anticipates that the saving results of his labors will be proportionate to the fidelity and zeal with which they are supported by the individual evangelism of the churches.

The record of his work, both in England and in this country, demonstrates the truth and the importance of this view. It contains very numerous instances of conversion as the result of this form of evangelistic labor, many of which are strikingly interesting and instructive. In this regard Dr. Torrey is not peculiar. In this point the successful evangelists of the present day are all in hearty accord. They agree that this is one of the chief instrumentalities through which the Kingdom of Christ is to be extended in these latter days.

Among other methods of Christian work, suggested by the experience of the church of the present, in distinction from that of the primitive disciples, is the work of

#### THE SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

The power of this organization for good and its adaptation to meet a want of the church of the present, are attested by its marvelous growth and extension. During a very brief period it has encircled the globe, and, including the denominational societies which have grown out of the original organiza-

tion, a vast multitude of the children and youth has been brought into the church through its instrumentality. In what belongs essentially to Endeavor work its peculiarity is limitation to labors in behalf of the young. The methods which are peculiar to the organization appertain rather to the development of the Christian life of its members than to evangelistic labor.

It is true that in a special sense Christian Endeavor is an aggressive and evangelizing force. It provides for going out after the unconverted among the children and youth. But, in the main, this is accomplished by bringing them under the influence of the services conducted by the society. In this regard its work partakes of that of the church and of the Sabbath school. Aside from what is peculiar to its manner of conducting public services the evangelistic methods of the organization are such as are common to other forms of Christian work. In the main what has been said of methods of Christian work in connection with the church and with the Sabbath school is equally applicable to that of the Society of Christian Endeavor, and of course, need not here be repeated. In its proper sphere as an auxiliary to the church, the importance of the Christian Endeavor work cannot be overestimated. And what is here said of Christian Endeavor is true of the denominational organizations which are an outgrowth of the original Endeavor movement.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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# METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

(Continued.)

"We are laborers together with God."—I. Cor. iii., 9.



## METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

(CONTINUED.)

IN his adoption of methods of Christian work the believer is left to a large liberty. There are various forms of presenting the Gospel invitation through which he may approach the unregenerate. While the duty is plainly inculcated by the Scriptures, and there is no ground for question in regard to the general obligation, no exclusive or set forms have been prescribed for his guidance or direction. They may be as various and as diversified as the peculiar character and circumstances of the workers and of the subjects of their labor. Plans suggested by the conditions of one time and place may become obsolete and new conditions may demand new forms of Christian service. Aside from those methods which are called into use in the normal activities of the church and its subordinate organizations, there are means of reaching the unconverted that come of the peculiar conditions of our modern civilization. They are rendered practicable by a state of things unknown to the early church. Among methods of this class and which have proved in a high degree effective, is

### THE USE OF THE PRESS.

The writing and circulation of religious books, periodicals and tracts have proved a most effective

instrumentality in the work of winning souls. Through this means great numbers now in glory were brought to Christ. Their first abiding religious impressions were received from a printed page, placed in their hands by a pious friend or neighbor. By the blessing of God, the book or tract proved a leaf from the tree of life. It was an arrow from the quiver of the Almighty, through which the enmity of the natural heart was slain.

This is a method of extending the Gospel invitation that should be very widely employed. Through this instrumentality almost every disciple of Christ may join in this work. In this manner the call may be extended to many who are living in neglect of Christ and of the ordinances of his house. The necessary literature is within the reach of all, and in a great variety of ways it may be brought to the notice of those who would gladly receive it. The professional man may keep it in his office, the merchant in his counting room and the mechanic in his shop. As many as have a leisure hour at command may spend it in distributing a periodical or tract from house to house, and where this is lacking an opportunity may be sought of placing it in the hands of an acquaintance or of a stranger. Where this is done and the act accompanied in the spirit of the true disciple, by a word expressive of interest in the well-being of the person addressed, it can hardly fail of



leaving a salutary and abiding impression. Perhaps there is no other method of Christian work that is more effective. It adds to the power of Gospel teaching that of personal influence. It is the invitation of the Word supported by the testimony of the disciple. In this manner a chain of influences has been set in operation, the end of which eternity alone can reveal.

It is said that Richard Baxter was converted through the instrumentality of a tract brought to his father's door in the pack of a pious peddler. One of his works, "The Saints' Rest," was instrumental in the conversion of Philip Doddridge. "The Rise and Progress" written by Doddridge, was blessed to the conversion of William Wilberforce. Through the reading of "The Practical View," written by Wilberforce, Thomas Chalmers, Leigh Richmond and probably many others were brought to Christ.

This story of the pious peddler and his tract has been often told and is familiar to many Christian readers, but it is a history that the church of the present cannot afford to forget. The importance of the simple act of leaving this tract where it fell under the eye of an unconverted youth, it is impossible to estimate. In this succession of conversions we have a very small part only of the results of his act. It was the origin of a train of influences to which the church of every succeeding age is a debtor.

But if we limit our view to the facts here stated who shall estimate the influence of a single tract? Baxter and Doddridge were among the most useful and eminent ministers of modern times. Wilberforce was distinguished as a Christian statesman and philanthropist; Chalmers was not only a prince of preachers, but he also arose to the commanding position among the great Christian philosophers and reformers of the world. Leigh Hunt also became eminent as a minister and writer. It is said that "The Dairy Man's Daughter," written by him has been translated into more than fifty languages, and it has been instrumental doubtless in the conversion of thousands of souls. The influence of these men in their direct personal labors and in the works which they left will be felt till the coming of the Son of Man. But if we add to this view that of the work and influence of the vast number who were brought to Christ through their influence, the mind utterly fails to grasp the magnitude of the result or the momentous importance of this single act.

Another illustration of what may be accomplished by a single tract: "A son of one of the chiefs of Burdwan was converted by a tract. He could not read, but he went to Rangoon, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. Here the wife of a missionary taught him to read, and in forty-eight hours he could read the tract through. He took a basket-

ful of tracts; with much difficulty he preached the Gospel at his own home, and was the means of converting hundreds to God. He was a man of influence; the people flocked to hear him; and in one year fifteen hundred natives were baptized in Arracan as members of the church, and all through this one little tract."

A successful pastor in Brooklyn, New York, in giving an account of a powerful revival with which his church had been visited, says of the instrumentalities employed: "During the progress of this work hundreds of tracts and small books have been freely circulated. Among the most effective have been Hall's 'Come to Jesus,' 'The Delaying Inquirer,' 'The Honest Effort,' 'Questions and Counsel,' 'Where Will You Spend Eternity?' and 'Quench Not the Spirit.'" To the invitations presented by the members of the church in this manner he ascribes a very important influence in bringing sinners to the Saviour. It is believed that the experience of other pastors and churches that have made a faithful use of this instrumentality will essentially correspond to that here related.

Many years ago a colporteur of the American Tract Society in Texas, with evangelical literature in his saddle bags offered to make a present of a volume to a wagoner. "My friend," said the wagoner, "I will be plain with you; I never read any-

thing of that kind." "Perhaps your wife would like to read the book." "Well my wife is a religiously inclined woman, and I will accept this book and present it to her."

Several years afterward the donor, in the busy streets of a commercial town in Texas, looking out for wagons by which to send books to the interior, was asked by a good looking man, "Do you recollect me?" "I do not." "Are you the gentleman who some years ago gave me a religious book?" The reply was "Yes."

"Well," said the wagoner, bursting into a flood of tears, "I am that man and I have been wanting to see you ever since. I was then a ringleader in wickedness, a terror to my neighborhood. I am now a preacher. The book you so kindly gave me for my wife proved the means of my conversion. You certainly never could have given a book to any one under more unfavorable circumstances. I told you candidly I never read religious books. You suggested that my wife might read it, and I took it on her account. Stopping to eat and graze my oxen on the road, I concluded I would look over the book, and became somewhat interested. Arriving at home, Providence prostrated me on a bed of sickness. I had recourse to the book intended for my wife, read it, was led through its teachings to the foot of the Cross, and enabled to repose my faith in the bleeding Victim and to accept, as I humbly trust, of sal-

vation through the merit of his atoning blood. And here I am, a sinner saved through grace and a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, all under God, owing to the reading of a book you kindly presented to me, with a hope that it might be a benefit to my wife." Such was his story. He was furnished with more evangelical literature and again sent forth to apply to others the same wonderful cure for sin-sick souls.

We may learn from this narrative that, with regard to their spiritual interests, men of the worst class are sometimes candid and approachable. Their consciences are on the side of the truth and they are disposed to treat any manifestation of interest in their welfare with respect. We may learn also from the story of this conversion the importance of the circulation of books and tracts. The printed page goes where even the lay preacher cannot go, and it frequently is read at a time that is most favorable to the reception of the truth, which it sets forth. But we may learn also that a message designed for one person frequently reaches another for whom it was not intended. It is safe and profitable to sow beside all waters.

We may not anticipate that all work in this direction will be followed by equally important results, but we may reasonably hope that conscientious efforts to reach the careless through the instrumentality of the press, will bear precious fruit to the glory of our Master and to the saving of the lost.

*THROUGH EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.*

This is an especially scriptural method of saying, "Come." It was extensively employed by the Apostles and the primitive disciples. A large portion of the New Testament Scriptures was written in this form, and numerous letters addressed to individuals or churches by uninspired writers of the Apostolic age have come down to our own time. This method of disseminating the truth continued to be extensively employed during the earlier periods of the Christian church. Indeed to a greater or less extent it has always been employed, especially in seasons of religious interest, or when the church is in a state of renewed and quickened spiritual life. And wherever it has been faithfully employed it has been owned and blessed of God. In their use of this method of preaching, the Apostles were guided by divine wisdom and they saw the fruit of their labors in this direction. And in proportion as the church of succeeding ages has been animated by the spirit of the Apostles and primitive believers it has availed itself of this method of extending the Gospel invitation.

Perhaps there is no other method excepting that of a personal invitation, only, that to the same extent, is adapted to awaken the attention of the careless. In the message from the sacred desk, or through the printed page, there is an absence of directness that materially diminishes its power. In

these forms it is addressed, not to a particular individual, but to a congregation or to the public. The invitation is general. It has no special reference to any individual. But a letter is a direct and special invitation. It is a call in particular to the person addressed. It is a message from God, not to the community, nor to a class to which he belongs, but to his own soul.

As such it cannot be altogether disregarded. Of necessity it leaves an impression. The directness of the appeal is an element of its power. It is this that arrests attention and impresses the truth upon the heart and conscience. The same message from the pulpit or the printed page might fall upon leaden ears. If the hearer gave it a serious thought, his feeling might be that it was especially appropriate to some neighbor or acquaintance whom he had in mind, and that it must have been especially designed, if not for the very individual, at least for persons of his class. And in his interest in assigning the message to another he forgets to make any personal application. He loses sight of his own spiritual condition and of his own spiritual needs. But a friendly epistle is an appeal directly and exclusively to himself; and since it cannot be passed to another, it reaches his own heart.

To a large class of believers the opportunity of presenting the invitation in this manner is very frequently presented. In the relations of believers or

in their ordinary family or friendly correspondence, the way is constantly opened for saying a word for their Master. Not infrequently a special Providence presents the opportunity of impressing the truth. The mind of a friend or acquaintance is brought into such a state as to prepare him in an unusual degree to receive the message. And if every opportunity of this nature were faithfully improved, the result would be an abundant harvest.

Impenitent persons not infrequently expect to receive the invitation in this manner. They know very well that this is a duty which Christians owe to those within reach of their influence, and in many instances a friendly word would be very welcome. But if the opportunity is permitted to pass unimproved, they are sometimes disappointed and saddened and their respect for religion is materially diminished.

#### THE EXAMPLE OF HARLAN PAGE.

A striking illustration of what may be accomplished in this direction by faithful and earnest labor, is presented by the correspondence of Harlan Page. Mr. Page had no extraordinary gifts as a writer and his opportunities were such only as come to an ordinary mechanic. But he was animated by a consuming zeal for the saving of the lost and this gave him great power with the unsaved. This gift he used with great effect in his correspondence. He appears to have been



continually on the alert for an opportunity to say a word for Christ, and his labors in this direction were greatly blessed to the quickening and encouragement of believers and to the awakening of the careless. His efforts in the use of this instrumentality were not limited to his ordinary correspondence. His zeal for Christ and for souls moved him to the use of his pen when this was his sole object.

The following extract from a letter addressed to him by a cousin in answer to one of his faithful and pungent appeals indicates something of the success with which his labor in this direction was crowned:—

“When your letter was received it was a dagger to my soul; but now, my dear consin, I think I know something by experience of the excellency of religion, and the peace there is in casting all my burdens on Him who cares for us. Within a few weeks I have taken real satisfaction in reading that kind letter. I thank you for it. Do now write me again.”

This was by no means an isolated instance of his success in addressing the unconverted by this method. A large number were brought to Christ through the earnest and solemn appeals presented in his letters.

The late John Vine Hall, in his account of the ordination of his son, the Rev. Newman Hall, D.D., of London, England, makes the following statement: “He spoke of his early advantages, but acknowledged that his religion was merely outward, until a circum-

stance aroused him seriously to seek salvation in Christ Jesus. This was simple but was made effective by the Holy Spirit. *It was a letter from a younger sister.*" If other sisters were equally faithful to impenitent brothers, how many now unsaved, would be rejoicing in hope, if not laboring for Christ as ministers of his Gospel!

Of the means employed in promoting a revival through which large numbers were brought to Christ, the pastor said: "Those who could not be reached by a visit were addressed by friendly letters. Several of these letters brought men to the mercy seat and to the Cross of Christ *who had stood out thirty years of preaching perfectly unmoved.*"\* We may not limit the power of the Holy Spirit. He is able to give efficacy to any and to all instrumentalities, but it may be doubted whether any other means available by this church would have been effectual to the conversion of those men. How impressive the lesson of this incident then to those who have the opportunity of approaching the unregenerate through epistolary correspondence!

#### BY THE USE OF MONEY.

In the divine method of disseminating the Gospel and in every adaptation of this method to the changing circumstances of the churches, that has been success-

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\*Dr. T. L. Cuyler in religious paper.

fully employed for the accomplishment of this end, there is a constant demand for the use of money. The instrumentalities employed are set in operation and sustained only by pecuniary expenditures. Preachers of the Gospel, whether ordained ministers or lay workers, are to be prepared for their work and either sustained at home or sent abroad; churches and the various religious and benevolent institutions are to be established and maintained, and religious books, tracts and periodicals are to be prepared, published and put into circulation. These are the ordinary means of the edification of believers and of the conversion of the unregenerate. But the calling into being and the successful operation of these agencies involve the expenditure of large sums of money. Without this, comparatively little will be accomplished. The ordinary work of the church calls for a degree of self-sacrifice on the part of the people of God, and extraordinary work implies extraordinary sacrifices in this direction. If the Lord's work is to be successfully carried forward his people must say "Come," by freely contributing of their substance to this end. There must be a sacrifice of self for this object.

#### THE MORAL EFFECT OF CHRISTIAN GIVING.

Pecuniary sacrifices are needful, not only because the work of the church cannot be carried on without money, but also for the sake of the moral effect of

the sacrifice. It is well understood that a spirit of self-sacrifice is an essential characteristic of the true believer. It is a fundamental principle of the Christian life. It is the theory of the Christian faith, that this is one of the necessary fruits of godliness. The world is constantly trying the church by this standard, and when it is obvious that this spirit is lacking its aggressive power is seriously diminished. Though there may be some respect for the religion of the Gospel in the abstract, there is no confidence in the godliness of the individual professor.

But without the free exercise of this grace, the piety of the church in general will languish. There will be an atrophy of all the graces of the divine life. Christian giving is a most important means of grace. Where it is neglected the spiritual man is dwarfed and his progress in the divine life is materially retarded. The indulgence of a covetous spirit is chilling and benumbing to all the religious affections. While the believer withholds from Christ the pecuniary offerings which are his due, he not only suffers in his Christian life, but he is disinclined to all other forms of Christian service. He is unfitted for usefulness as a disciple of Christ in any direction.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF COVETOUSNESS.

Perhaps there is no greater obstacle at the present day to the progress of the Gospel than the covetous-

ness of the church. The great reason that Christians are doing so little for Christ is that they have so much to do for self,—so much to do for the gratification of their unsanctified inclinations and desires. By their haste to be rich, they not only dishonor their profession, but they bring leanness upon their own souls and they unfit themselves for any efficient Christian service. John Wesley said “he had known but four men whose piety had not suffered from their becoming rich.” And what was true in Mr. Wesley’s day is true in an enlarged measure in this fast and reckless age. Nothing is more characteristic of the opening of the twentieth century than this mad pursuit of gain. The present period is the money-getting age,—the age of accumulation and of material advancement. Through the prevalence of this sin the church suffers in its standing before the world, its enterprises for the spread of the Gospel languish and its members are disqualified for any efficiency in Christian work. While impenitent men continue to see the professed disciples of Christ so largely absorbed in the pursuit of the world they are not likely to be won to his service through their instrumentality.

#### TESTIMONY OF AN EMINENT WITNESS.

On this point an earnest evangelical writer says: “The great mass of property in the Christian church is *unconsecrated* property. It is sought and possessed

for selfish purposes. It is not dedicated to God and used with an eye single to his glory. 'The root' of this 'evil' is *'the love of money,'*—the easily besetting sin of the world,—the great foe of Christianity, exceedingly sly and artful, exceedingly liable to escape unsuspected and unproved, even in the bosom of the church. For while it is impossible for a profane man or a drunkard to maintain a respectable standing in the church a covetous man may do this, because the sin is *within* and, perhaps, because the avaricious man is looked upon by his brethren too charitably; and a sin in which it is believed that he is indulging is not made a matter for admonition and church discipline."\*

#### EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE.

While, unhappily, on this point there is no ground for any difference of opinion and small danger of exaggeration, it is also true that the church always presents some marked exceptions to the rule. Some bright examples of the true spirit of self-sacrifice and of true Christian benevolence are afforded by the history of the church of recent times. It may be believed that among those are many whose conscientious use of their money,—their unobtrusive benevolence and Christian giving,—are never heralded beyond the limited sphere in which they move. But among

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\*The Rev. Henry C. Fish, D.D., in "Prim. Piety Revived," page 70.

the more eminent and widely known instances of conscientious stewardship and true Christian benevolence may be mentioned the late Anson G. Phelps and William E. Dodge, for many years partners in business. If these men were not more faithful stewards than many others in less prominent positions, they were enabled by their great success in business to contribute very large sums to the work of the church and to other objects of Christian benevolence. They not only left large bequests to the church at their decease, but during their entire business career they were their own executors in the dispensing of large sums of money as the stewards of Christ. It is said that during the later years of his life when his business was most successful, Mr. Dodge gave to the church and to other benevolent objects, on an average a thousand dollars every day in the year.

There are other examples of this grace which, if less illustrious, are not less worthy of mention. Louisa Osborn, a colored domestic, with an income of one dollar a week, gave twenty dollars a year for the education of a youth in Ceylon.

The story of the Christian giving of Mr. N. R. Cobb, though it has been often told, is worthy of a repetition. ~~Mr. Cobb conducted a mercantile business in Boston.~~ He was led to adopt the following rule for his guidance in appropriating his income, viz.: "To give from the outset, one quarter of the net

profits of his business; should he ever be worth twenty thousand dollars, to give one-half of the net profits; if worth thirty thousand dollars to give three-quarters; if ever worth fifty thousand dollars to give all the profits." This resolution was faithfully kept until his death at the age of thirty-six, he had acquired the fifty thousand dollars and was giving all the profits. During the time that he had followed this rule, he had been enabled to give to the various objects of Christian benevolence about forty thousand dollars.

Some years since a pious farmer commenced business in a rough mountain district of Massachusetts, with a debt of six hundred dollars. He began with the purpose to pay the debt in six years in equal installments and to give all his net income, if any remained after the payment of each installment. The income of the first year, however, was expended in purchasing stock and other necessities for his farm. During the next six years he paid the debt, and having abandoned the intention of ever being any richer, he continued to give his entire income, after supporting his family and educating his six children. During this period he lived with the strictest economy in everything pertaining to his home, dress and equipage; though he was twice a member of the State Senate he conscientiously continued his simplicity in his mode of life. His farm was rough and remote



from the village, and his entire property, real and personal, was not at any time worth more than three thousand dollars, and yet he was sometimes enabled to give from two to three hundred dollars a year.

When Norman Smith, of Hartford, Conn., was brought to a new and more entire consecration of himself to the divine service, he came to the conclusion that he ought to abandon his secular business, in order that he might do more for Christ. But as a result of a more mature consideration of the subject, he put on record the following resolution: "It is my purpose to engage in my business that I may serve God in it and with the expectation of *getting to give*."

In the instances above noticed and in many others that might be related, we have something of the true spirit of Christian stewardship. There is some befitting recognition of the believer's obligation to use his money for the honor of Christ and for the extension of his Kingdom. And something of this spirit is essential to any large measure of usefulness or of success in any form of Christian service. If we would say "Come," in such a manner as to have the invitation heeded we must show that we are living above the world in this regard. We must manifest something of the power of divine grace to deliver us from that inordinate "love of money" which is "the root of all evil" and to inspire us with "the mind" "which was also in Christ Jesus."



CHAPTER IX.

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METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL  
EVANGELISM.  
(Continued.)

"The night cometh, when no man can work."—John ix., 4.



## METHODS OF INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

(CONTINUED.)

WE have seen that there are various methods of extending the Gospel invitation, which are in accord with the teachings of the Scriptures, and which have proved effective. There are many ways in which the earnest believer may say "Come." But perhaps there is no other in which he can so effectually say it as by

### A DIRECT PERSONAL INVITATION.

The believer's commission as a preacher, viz.: "Let him that heareth say, Come," appears to have special reference to this manner of extending the invitation. These words are an injunction to all who have tasted the grace of the Gospel to go directly to their unsaved friends and neighbors with the message of salvation. They are a permission to act out in this direction the impulses of a renewed heart. One of the first emotions of the new-born soul,—the new creature in Christ Jesus, as he becomes conscious of pardon and acceptance through the atoning blood,—is the desire to see others brought to the Saviour. At once he is moved by an earnest longing to see others, now dead in trespasses and sins, delivered from their bondage and brought to rejoice in the glorious and precious hope to which he himself has been begotten. At once he is impelled to put forth some effort to bring them to the Cross. The call of the Gospel is a call to begin to preach Christ

in the exercise of this spirit. Primarily and especially it is a call to direct personal work for the saving of the lost.

This doctrine has an illustration in the first converts to Christ and in the history of revivals and of individual conversions in every age of the church. It is recorded of Andrew, the brother of Peter, that having become a disciple of Christ, "he first findeth his own brother, Simon; and saith unto him, 'We have found the Messias.' And he brought him to Jesus."\* Andrew appears to have been the first witness for Jesus and the first lay preacher. In this act he is a model for believers in all time. In the spirit which he manifests and in this discharge of duty he illustrates the character and the work of the true convert. His first impulse as he finds the Messias is to communicate the glad tidings to his brother. He cannot rest until Simon has been brought to Christ. And in his commission as a Christian witness and worker, the believer is taught to follow his example in acting out in this regard the impulses of a renewed heart.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE PERSONALITY.

The direct appeal of one individual to another is rendered effective by the personal influence of the one by whom the appeal is made. The message has

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\*John i., 41, 42.

power somewhat in proportion to the weight of character of the man or woman behind it. There is an indefinable something in the personal presence, in the bearing, in the expression, in the words employed and in the tones of voice in which they are uttered that cannot be imparted to a manuscript or to a printed page. Where the life of the believer is such as to honor his profession and to convince the unsaved of his right to extend the invitation, there is a power in his personality that is apart from and in addition to that of the truth which he presents. There is something in his presence that gives additional weight to the message that he brings. Under all ordinary circumstances this personal influence is the strongest which the believer has at his command. It is especially to the use of this influence that the words of his commission have reference. He is to say "Come" directly, or with his voice. It means a personal conveyance of the divine message to the unregenerate. He is required to add the weight of his personality to that of his testimony as a witness for Christ.

This is what occurs in the direct personal invitation. In going directly to the unregenerate with the message of salvation the believer offers his testimony as a new creature in Christ Jesus to the reality of the Christian faith, and thus his testimony is effective in proportion to the weight of his personal char-

acter as a disciple of Christ. Other things being equal he is successful in winning souls in proportion to the power of his Christian influence.

#### INCIDENTAL EXPRESSIONS EFFECTIVE.

Where the personal character is such as to give weight to the invitation, very simple methods of presenting it may prove effectual. A word of warning spoken by the way,—an incidental remark expressive of interest in the spiritual welfare of an unconverted friend or neighbor,—may result in the saving of a soul. “A young lady meeting a friend in the street, who had hitherto repulsed every approach in that direction simply said, ‘I am praying for you.’ The words were quietly and trustingly uttered, but they led the young man to feel that if he was in need of being prayed for by others he certainly needed to pray for himself, and thus he was led to the Saviour.”

The following from the life of McCheyne presents a similar illustration: “J. B. walked home with me, telling me what God had done for his soul, when one day I had stopped at the quarry on account of a shower of rain, and had taken shelter with my pony in the engine house, I had simply pointed to the fire of the furnace and said: ‘What does that remind you of?’ and the words had remained deep in the man’s soul.”



These simple incidents present a lesson to all who would acquire wisdom in winning souls. They show that God is able to make a single sentence instrumental in turning a sinner to the Saviour. They illustrate also the importance of watchfulness in seeking opportunities of speaking a word for Christ. If every sincere lover of his cause were as watchful and as earnest as a few have been, how frequently might they be instrumental in saving a soul from death!

#### A TIME FOR INTENSE EARNESTNESS.

There are times in the history of most believers when there is a demand for something more than an incidental remark. There are times for the manifestation of the most intense earnestness. Occasions arise when the believer must seek an interview with a friend or acquaintance, or even with a stranger, and press upon him the call of the Gospel. There are times for the exercise of a "holy violence," times to lay hold of the lost in such manner as to "compel them to come in," as to bring them to Jesus.

To a Christian friend who came to watch with him during his last illness, Harlan Page said: "Brother, when you meet impenitent sinners, don't merely say, calmly, 'Friend, you are in danger,' but approach them with a holy violence and labor to pull them out of the fire. They *are* going to perdition. There is a heaven and a hell."

A brother of Charles Simeon, on his dying bed, extended his hand to him and with deep emotion said: "I am dying and you never warned me of the state in which I was and of the great danger I was in of neglecting the salvation of my soul." "Nay, my brother," said Simeon, "but I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject of religion before you and frequently alluded to it in my letters." "Yes," said the dying man, "*but you never came to me, closed the door and took me by the collar of my coat and told me I was unconverted, and that if I died in that state I should be lost, and now I am dying and but for God's grace I might have been forever undone.*"

In the words of these dying saints we have a true view of the momentous importance of this work. We learn how it appears to men who are brought to a very near view of eternal things, who see themselves as about to be ushered into the presence of their Judge. It is only as we see this world in the light of eternity, in the light of an eternal heaven and of an eternal hell, that we have any adequate conception of the unspeakable importance of awakening the unconverted to a sense of their awful peril. It is only in this light that we obtain any proper sense of our duty to the lost, or of the guilt of failing to care for their souls. It is only in this light that we see what we owe to Christ in this regard and what

we owe to sinners about us who are ready to perish. It is only in this light that we are able to form any just conception of the significance of the words of Jesus in which he calls us to go out "and compel them to come in." The "holy violence" enjoined by Harlan Page is the only scriptural, the only rational attitude of the people of God toward those who are fast asleep on the very brink of eternal perdition.

#### • PRACTICAL WISDOM IN WINNING SOULS.

Perhaps there is no department of Christian work in which there is greater need of the exercise of practical wisdom, or common sense, than in direct approaches to the unregenerate. Under all ordinary circumstances success is likely to depend upon the manner in which the person is approached and upon the spirit which the manner indicates. The spirit of the true Christian witness and worker,—a zeal for Christ and a love of souls,—cannot be simulated except in a very imperfect degree, and common sense and tact cannot be taught, but both may be acquired. And it should be the ambition of every disciple of Christ to become proficient in these gifts. The believer must learn to approach the unconverted wisely and in the right spirit if he would win them to Christ. There is a time and a place for this work and a wise regard to both is essential to success.

It is to be borne in mind that a lack of success may be something more than a failure. If we fail through our own indiscretion we are almost certain to have inflicted an injury rather than to have done good. If we fail to attract there is great danger that we may repel.

But while we are to have a wise regard to time and place and to study to be careful and judicious in the manner of presenting the invitation, we must see to it that we are not so prudent and discreet as to do nothing. Satan is always ready with his suggestion that the future will be a better time and that the present does not offer a suitable opportunity. At this point there is a danger to be avoided. But in avoiding this we are not to disregard the dictates of prudence and common sense. The following may serve to illustrate the view here presented. At a Christian convention, an earnest and efficient Christian worker gave an account of his conversion as follows:

"I want to tell you what a layman did for me in Greenfield, Massachusetts. I was only sixteen years old. My mother had died in the previous December. I was driving the cows home toward evening through a slight rain. A man with an umbrella overtook me, and holding it over me, said: 'My boy, those are fine cows.' 'Yes,' said I, 'they are fine. Why, that one with the short horns and broad back is a Durham.'

His interest in what interested me won me. After a while he asked: 'Have you got a mother?' 'No, sir,' said I, 'she died last Winter.' 'What was the last thing she said?' 'Oh, sir, the last thing she said was, "May God have mercy on these children."' 'Well, my boy, aren't you a Christian?' 'No, sir.' 'Why aren't you?' 'I expect it is because I love sin so much.' Fixing his eyes earnestly on mine, and shifting his umbrella so as to grasp my hand with his right hand, he said, 'What, my boy! and you not a Christian!' 'No, sir,' said I, with streaming eyes, 'but I want to be. And then he talked with me so gently and kindly that I never shall forget it. Oh, the power of a seasonable word! It was lay preaching.'

This is an illustration of the exercise of common sense and tact in approaching the unconverted. It is an example of a wise method of seeking the avenues to a boy's heart. And who shall estimate the results of this simple effort to save a soul! If they were limited to the individual directly benefited, the importance of this interview would be incalculable. But if we add to this the fruits of his life of earnest labor for Christ and for souls, with what momentous significance is this simple conversation invested!

But what was done by this layman in Massachusetts, other men and women may learn to do. Obviously enough, this was not his first effort to save a soul. His proficiency was the result of his study

and of his practice in this direction. "What he acquired as a lay worker others may acquire. And it is to be remembered that the capacity to acquire these gifts involves the obligation to acquire them.

#### IMPROVING AN OPPORTUNITY.

"Nearly a quarter of a century has passed," says a Christian lady, "since when on a visit to this State from the Far West, while stopping for a day in one of its most staid and puritanic country towns, a little girl about twelve years of age, among other persons, was passing through the room where I was sitting. At first I took no more notice of her than of the rest, but suddenly, as she was passing, I felt a strong impression that I *must* speak to her about her soul and about her Saviour. . Satan as usual suggested, 'Folly, all folly,' but I yielded to the first and best impulse and when she returned asked her, as others were present, if she 'would show me the garden?' She pleasantly said, 'Yes.' So while showing me her flowers, I said to her all that I felt impressed to say; and although I cannot now remember one sentence, yet I think I shall never forget the relief and sweet peace that I enjoyed as we returned to the house, although I could perceive no impression made upon her mind. Immediately after this we parted. Three years elapsed, when one day a lady, just returned from a visit to her native town, called to see me. It

was the town where my heroine lived. She stated that she came to see me, by special request; that soon after her arrival at R——, this child, now a young lady, called to inquire if Mrs. —— did not live in her town, and when told that she did, was much delighted and wished her to present me very many thanks for my kind warning, three years before, as it was the means of bringing her to Jesus; 'and,' added the lady, 'that was not all. As I had before been told by the people there, it was the means of the greatest revival ever experienced in that town, through that little girl, who like a true and faithful Christian went around and exhorted others, not to go but to come with her to her precious Jesus, until in a little while more than one hundred were hopefully converted and united with the church.' "

There are two very important lessons taught by this narrative. First, learn from it not to permit Satan to divert you from the execution of a good purpose. Follow your first and best impulse, and second, do not conclude that your labor has been in vain because you do not at once see the fruit of it. The good seed may produce an abundant harvest "after many days."

#### PERSONAL WORK IN REVIVALS.

All times are appropriate times for individual Christian effort. As the Gospel must be preached

in times of religious declension as well as in revivals, so the work of the individual believer should know neither cessation nor respite. But as the work of the minister is productive of unusual results in revivals, so that of the individual believer is especially effective at such times. A revival may begin through the labors of one or more of the private members of the church, and its fruitfulness may be greatly increased in the same manner, from whatever source it may have had its rise. The revival is a time for special work on the part of every true disciple.

Of a powerful revival in an Eastern city, the pastor wrote: "The principal instrumentality employed during this revival has been the personal visitation of, and conversation with the impenitent by the church members. The best teachers went to the homes of their scholars and talked with each one. There are over fifty hopeful conversions already in the Sabbath school. The eighteen officers of the church met together and assigned to each one certain persons to be seen and labored with. As an illustration of the chain of influences that has been created, I may mention the case of a merchant who came into one of the inquiry meetings,—held after the preaching service,—and there decided to do his duty to God and to his household. He immediately waited on an intimate friend and brought him to the meetings. The man thus brought rose at once for prayers and



gave his heart to Jesus. He in turn handed to a lady friend on the ferryboat a copy of Newman Hall's admirable little treatise, 'Come to Jesus.' Within a fortnight she was enrolled in the church. Who can tell when the last link will be added to that golden chain?"\*

#### THE MESSAGE OVERHEARD.

As an illustration of what is sometimes accomplished by accident, or without any intention on the part of the person speaking, the following is instructive: On a certain occasion, Lady Huntington "spoke to a workman who was repairing a garden wall and pressed him to take some thought concerning eternity and the state of his soul. Some years afterwards she was speaking to another workman on the same subject and said to him, 'Thomas, I fear you never pray, nor look to Christ for salvation.' 'Your ladyship is mistaken,' answered the man; 'I heard what passed between you and James at such a time, and the word you designed for him took effect on me.' 'How did you hear it?' inquired Lady Huntington. 'I heard it,' answered the man, 'on the other side of the garden through a hole in the wall, and I shall never forget the impression I received.'"

There are other methods of Christian work, the discussion of which would unduly swell this volume.

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\*Rev. T. L. Cuyler, D.D., in a religious paper.

The foregoing is not offered as an exhaustive discussion of the subject. But familiarity with these methods and a conscientious discharge of the duty pointed out can hardly fail to suggest such other forms of presenting the Gospel message as the circumstances may require. Where the heart is enlisted some way will be found to say "Come," and there is little danger of a serious mistake.

## CHAPTER X.

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# INCENTIVES TO INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

"How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"  
Rom. x., 14.



## INCENTIVES TO INDIVIDUAL EVANGELISM.

To a being who knew nothing of the characteristics of fallen human nature, it would doubtless appear altogether superfluous to present to a disciple of Christ motives to a faithful discharge of this obligation. It is too plain to be mistaken, and the thoughtful believer can hardly be unconscious of an attraction to this service. The spirit of obedience and the instincts of a renewed heart unite to impel him to the work of winning souls.

But such are the infirmities of human nature, even in its regenerate state, that it is only under the influence of a strong incentive that the mass of believers are aroused to a discharge of this duty. "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." In every human heart there is a strong inclination to a life of self-indulgence and carelessness and indifference to spiritual things. There is a tendency to lose the vividness of our first impressions of eternal realities, and, in consequence, to become to a great extent insensible to the peril of lost men. To this inclination we are morally certain to yield unless it is consciously and earnestly resisted. Hence we constantly have need to keep before our minds such incentives to fidelity as shall overcome the spiritual inertia of our fallen nature. We need to have constantly in view such motives as are adapted to impel us to earnest

work for Christ. Of such incentives there is no lack and of their impelling power no believer should be unconscious.

### THE CALL OF THE MASTER.

The first and great incentive to the discharge of this obligation is a regard for the authority of Christ. The knowledge that God requires it is the strongest reason that we can have for any act or course of conduct. To the devout mind no other incentive can be so influential as the fact that Christ has called him to this service. Every disciple of Christ, as we have seen, has a direct individual or personal call to Christian witnessing and work. This of itself should be a sufficient motive to incline him to earnest and faithful labor for Christ. It should be quite enough that Christ has said: "Let him that heareth say, Come,"—that he has required him to join with "the Spirit and the Bride" in the invitations of the Gospel.

Before we shall accomplish any great work for Christ we must be animated by a spirit of Christian obedience,—a spirit of devout and humble submission to the divine authority and will. We must be under the influence of a fixed and deliberate purpose to make the will of God, as revealed in his Word, the guide of our life. Without the manifestation of this spirit we shall have no power with unregenerate men. If we would prevail in our efforts to turn them

to the Saviour we must give them evidence of our own consecration to the divine service. We must show them, not only that we are constrained by the love of Christ, but that we are living for him and that we are engaged in his work in obedience to his requirement. Impenitent men know what God requires of his people and they set for them a very high standard of Christian living and service. They expect them to be very consistent in their walk and conversation. And we shall have power with God and with men only as it is plain that we are making an honest and earnest effort to do his will in a spirit of conscientious obedience.

#### A REGARD FOR THE DIVINE GLORY.

In most minds, perhaps, the idea of the divine glory, not only as an incentive to Christian service, but also in itself, exists in a somewhat vague and shadowy form. They have been taught that "man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever," and, in a general sense they profess to make this the ever-present motive of their lives. But their apprehension of the doctrine is inadequate and defective; and in consequence it is not in a high degree potential as the spring of their course of life as believers, or of their work as the servants of Christ.

But if we really belong to Christ, his glory must be to us the supreme end of our life. Every other ob-

ject must occupy a subordinate place in our affections. This is our Christian profession. It is the theory of the Christian life, that in our conversion our supreme affections were transferred from the sinful pleasures and pursuits of the world to God and to the reward of his service. It is our claim that as the result of this change in our supreme affections, our lives are devoted to the service of Christ and that we are making his glory the great end of our being. We profess to pursue our secular calling and every object of a temporal nature in subordination to this supreme end of our life.

But we promote the glory of our Master, chiefly, as in our manner of living we bear consistent testimony to the genuineness of our religion and as we are earnest and devoted laborers for Christ. We exalt God essentially as our lives reflect the character of Jesus Christ, and as we are instrumental in bringing sinners to the Saviour. The salvation of sinners is the end which God had in view, in the work of creation and in that of redemption. It is in this that he glorifies himself before the universe. And it is especially as we are "workers together with him" in promoting this end that we glorify his name, that we exalt him before the world. His glory is the supreme end of the work to which he has called his church. If it were possible to separate the two incentives, our zeal for the glory of God



must rise above our interest in the salvation of the lost. But as there is really one ultimate end, only, before us we must rejoice in the salvation of sinners, primarily and especially because it promotes the glory of the Saviour.

This connection between the glory of God and the efficient service of his people is clearly set forth by our Lord in his valedictory discourse. To the Apostles he says: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."\* We show that we are really disciples as we render to Christ faithful service, and in this service we answer the end of our calling in glorifying God. We exalt him before the world as we bear much fruit. But our Lord teaches further that this is the supreme end for which his disciples are called into his kingdom. He says: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit."† It is true, then, that we honor God and thus answer the end of our Christian calling, as we are diligent and effective laborers for Christ. And to accomplish this purpose in bringing us into his kingdom should be to us the supreme incentive to faithful and earnest labor for Christ.

The keeping of this end in view is essential to the largest success. We shall be effective in winning

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\*John xv., 8. †John xv., 16.

souls only as we are animated by an intelligent and ardent zeal for the glory of God. The Redemptorists, a body of young Romish priests, adopted this rule for their daily life: "Before you begin your work, say, 'All for Thee, O Lord. O, my Jesus, all for Thee.'" and the significant watchword of the zealous Loyola was "*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*," for the greater glory of God.

Notwithstanding the error of their theological system this spirit made these men a power in the world. Their zeal in the prosecution of their work secured them a hearing. It opened the hearts of men to their instructions and won them as converts. In its outward form at least their zeal was orthodox and scriptural and it left a profound impression. If we would reach the hearts of the impenitent with the truth we must have something of the zeal by which these men were animated. We should cultivate the spirit so strikingly expressed in their words. We should study to make the glory of God the conscious end of all our work for Christ.

#### GRATITUDE FOR OUR OWN SALVATION.

If we really believe that we have been delivered from the curse of the broken law and made heirs of eternal life in heaven through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, it is hardly possible that our hearts should fail to overflow with grateful love to the

Author of our salvation. The absence of this affection would seem to indicate that we have never understood our condition as lost sinners and that we have never had any full consciousness of pardon and acceptance through the atoning blood. The man who has any proper experience of the joy of salvation can hardly fail to have some consciousness of grateful love to the Saviour of sinners. In some degree this affection is a necessary fruit of saving grace, and our grateful love is essentially proportionate to our sense of the sin and ruin from which we have been delivered.

There are many ways in which this affection may find expression, and even when it finds no outward expression that is observable by our fellow-men it may be open to the eye of him who "seeth not as man seeth." But the only fit expression of our grateful love is a life of holy obedience. If we have the gratitude which is born of the Holy Spirit, as the result of a saving change, it will move us to honor Christ by an active devotion to his service. We cannot fail to have some desire to give expression to our love; not only in words but also in acts of Christian obedience. This doctrine is taught by our Lord when he says: "If a man love me he will keep my words."\* The evidence of our love is our

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\*John xiv., 23.

devotion to the will of God. An obedient spirit is the evidence to Christ, but the evidence to the world is the outward act. And as this is the evidence to others, so also is it the evidence of sincerity to our own hearts. If we would have the evidence, then, that we are indeed grateful to God for our own salvation and would furnish this evidence to those by whom we are surrounded our love must go out in active and earnest service for Christ. It must move us to an earnest effort to bring others to the cross.

#### OUR BEST SERVICE A VERY INADEQUATE EXPRESSION OF OUR GRATITUDE.

If we have any befitting sense of the importance of salvation and of what Christ has done and suffered for us, the sacrifice involved in our best service will appear to us a very poor expression of the gratitude that we owe him. We shall have something of the feeling toward Christ which was expressed in regard to his native land by the Roman soldier who said: "What a pity that we have but one life to give for our country." The familiar words of the condemned criminal for whom Dr. Philip Doddridge had procured a pardon are a fit expression of the believer's sense of obligation to Christ. "Every drop of my blood thanks you, for you have had mercy upon every drop of it. *Wherever you go I will be yours.*" Who shall say that this was an ex-

travagant expression of gratitude. Under such circumstances anything less would have been lukewarm and heartless. But if this language was befitting to a human benefactor, however great the obligation, how much more befitting would it be as addressed by a redeemed sinner to his Saviour! He has been delivered not simply from the gallows, but from the pains of the second death,—from the torments of an eternal hell. The uttermost that any believer can do for Christ is the poorest and most inadequate expression of the love by which his bosom should be inspired.

#### THE UNREGENERATE ARE EXPECTING THIS INVITATION.

The world has a standard for the church, not only with regard to Christian character and Christian living, but also with reference to its obligations to Christian service. In many instances, doubtless, this standard is unscriptural and unreasonable, but it is sometimes quite in harmony with the principles of the Gospel; and when this is true it is a rule by which the believer cannot refuse to be tried. The people of the world understand the obligations of the professed disciples of Christ, and they are sometimes disposed to entertain the feeling that they have a claim upon church members to a certain interest in their spiritual welfare. And if they are inclined to

hold them somewhat rigidly to their obligations in this direction, it is not a matter of which the believer can complain. They have the Bible in their hands, and they know that to the church it is the rule of duty. Hence they know that it is the duty of the individual disciple to unite with "the Spirit and the bride" in saying "Come." They know that those who are animated by the spirit of Christ are inclined to this work. They believe that the impulses of a renewed heart move the believer to an effort to bring sinners to Jesus. They think that they have a right to anticipate that Christians by whom they are surrounded will make an effort to persuade them to accept the Saviour. And where no such effort is made they are sometimes inclined to cast the responsibility of their continued impenitence upon the church. They sometimes persuade themselves that if Christians were consistent and faithful they would accept the Gospel,—that the only reason that they are not converted is that no man cares for their souls.

It is true that this is their excuse only, not a reason for their continued impenitence. It is not to be admitted that the unfaithfulness of believers constitutes any justification of their refusal to accept the Gospel. But is it not true, nevertheless, that in the indifference of the Church they have a substantial ground of complaint? Is it not the fault of the church that they have an opportunity to offer this

excuse? It is well that they have the opportunity of hearing the invitations of the pulpit—that ‘the Spirit and the bride say, Come.’” But this is not all that Christ has required. To this he has added: “Let him that heareth say, Come.” This invitation is to be quite distinct from, and in addition to that of the church as an organization.

Impenitent men expect the invitations of the pulpit as a matter of course. They regard it as “the business” of one ordained to the work of the ministry to call sinners to repentance. Preaching is their “profession.” They “live of the Gospel;”<sup>\*</sup> moreover, there is something in the very method and order of the public ministrations of the Gospel that materially detracts from its power. The call is expected in some form at regular and stated intervals. Unregenerate men go to the house of God with a sort of preparation, if not a deliberate purpose to resist the influence of the pulpit. But in a direct personal invitation they are taken at unawares. They receive it under the influence of their first and best impulses. Their minds are not fortified against a manifestation of Christian interest and solicitude for their spiritual well-being. If the invitation is not anticipated the heart, on that account, is more open to religious impressions.

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<sup>\*</sup>I. Cor. ix., 14.

It may be believed, doubtless, that there is a large class of impenitent persons who very sincerely desire a personal invitation to come to Christ. They are altogether sincere in believing that it would be easier for them to accept the Gospel and that they would be more strongly inclined to forsake the world and cast in their lot with the people of God if Christians manifested an interest in their salvation. And there is a sense in which this is true. The intelligent believer may not only do something to arrest the attention of the unconverted and to incline them to accept the Gospel, but he may also do something to aid them in the effort to comply with the terms of pardon. The inquirer not only needs Christian sympathy, but not infrequently he needs also Christian instruction and guidance. A judicious word from an experienced and thoughtful believer may be of the greatest practical assistance to him.

Where this desire exists and no interest is manifest on the part of believers the effect is most unhappy. The serious and sensitive inquirer, if he is not indignant, is at least grieved and saddened by the feeling that no man cares for his soul. He is tempted to indulge the feeling that he is out of Christ only because Christians neglect to labor and to pray for his conversion. There is danger also that under this conviction his interest in spiritual things



may pass away and that he may be hardened in impenitence and unbelief.

The private history of the church abounds in illustrations of the truth here presented. Of the many that might be given I have space only for the following:

NOBODY SAID ANYTHING TO ME.

"The title which I have given to this sketch is taken from the lips of a young man, who afterwards became a member of my church. He had called upon me for conversation upon the subject of his religious duty; and after conversing with him, and saying such things to him as I thought appropriate to his state of mind, I asked him how it came about that he had not given his prayerful attention to the subject of religion before.

"'Nobody said anything to me,' said he.

"'Yes,' I replied, 'I have said a great many things to you.'

"'I know you have in sermons; but I mean nobody said anything to me in particular before yesterday.'

"'Who said anything to you yesterday?'

"'Henry Clap,' said he (naming a young man who had recently entertained a hope in God).

"'What did Henry say to you?'

"'As I met him in the street,' said he, 'he stopped me, and told me he had something to say to me, and

asked me if he might say it. I said, "Yes, he might." And then he said, "It is high time for you to begin to seek the Lord."

"And what did you answer?"

"I hardly had time to answer at all, for he passed on. But I said to him, when he got a few feet from me, 'So it is, Henry.' He turned back his face partly toward me, looking over his shoulder, and answered, 'Do it, then,' and went right on."

"Have you seen him since?"

"No, sir."

"You say nobody said anything to you before. If he or some one else, had spoken to you before, do you think you would have begun before?"

"I think I should."

"Such was the opinion of this young man. To this opinion he adhered long after. The last time I spoke to him on that subject, he said to me that he believed he 'should have sought the Lord years before if anybody had spoken to him about it.'"

"Here, then, was a young man, living in the midst of a Christian community till he was more than twenty years old, a regular attendant at church, known to scores of Christian men and women, and yet 'nobody said anything to him!' The first sentence that was uttered to him was not lost upon him."\*

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\*Rev. I. S. Spencer, D.D., in *Pastor's Sketches*.

## WATCHING FOR SOULS.

A young lady called to see a friend who was ill, and on leaving, one of the children, a sweet, intelligent little girl, took her downstairs. She was her own special favorite and pet, and yet, being naturally of an extremely reserved disposition, she had never spoken one word to her on the subject of religion. Looking down into the thoughtful, loving eyes, under a sudden impulse she asked the question, "Maud, my darling, do you love Jesus?" To her astonishment the child stopped abruptly, and drawing her into a room which they were passing, she shut the door, and clinging closely to her, burst into a flood of tears. Looking up at last with a glad, happy face, she said, "Miss Alice, I have been praying for six months that you would speak to me of Jesus, and now you have! Every time I have been in your house, and every time you have come here, I hoped you would say something, and I was beginning to think you never would." It was a keen-reproach to her friend, and one that she never forgot. Little Maud is now an earnest, consistent young soldier in Christ's army. No one who knows her doubts the reality of her religion, and certainly it gives her character an attractive grace which nothing else could give.

## NO MAN CARED FOR MY SOUL.

An elderly gentleman relates the following incident: "Some time since, I was traveling in Switzerland.

On the close of a brilliant day, I was anxious to see the last rays of the setting sun. I mounted a hill, and struck with admiration at the glorious coloring around me, I longed for a companion, to unite with me in praising the Son of Righteousness, thus visible in the beauties of creation. A distant whistle from a peasant, returning to his home, quickened my steps, but his speed far exceeded mine, and he was quickly out of sight. As I descended the height I walked close to a hedge, which bordered a deep ravine. The sound of voices from beneath arrested my attention; and, looking through the bushes, I beheld a body of men, wearing the appearance of banditti, at their evening meal. Here, I thought, is an opportunity of making known the plan of salvation; but my timid, bashful nature suggested the temerity of such an effort. One so totally defenseless as I was could not be called upon to face such a gang; so I moved on slowly, still listening to their rough language. Dissatisfied with my own cowardice I went near an opening in the hedge, to take another view; my foot trod upon unsafe ground, and I came down with the crumbling earth into the midst of the dreaded party.

“‘A booty! a booty!’ shouted the marauders. With a strength not my own, I echoed, with an undaunted voice, ‘A booty! A booty such as you have never received before!’ An unpleasant expression passed over their faces. I heeded it not, feeling assured I was God’s

ambassador. 'Yes,' I exclaimed, 'I bring you good news, glorious news, of a powerful Friend, who is able and willing to save both body and soul.' A tall, dark-featured man took up my words. 'Save my soul! No one has ever cared for my soul; I have been a castaway from my birth.' Opening my pocket Bible, I repeated from memory (for there was no other light but such as the starry firmament gave) suitable invitations, exhortations, and promises. O! how quick and powerful is the word of God, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart,—imparting light, life and hope! Finding the attention of my hearers riveted, I concluded with this verse, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners.' With heartfelt pleasure I heard a union of voices cry out, 'Let us shake hands upon that!' 'Let us, also,' I said, 'go to the Fountain of all strength, and ask God to confirm our resolutions.' They unanimously knelt down under the blue vault of heaven. Upon rising, the dark-featured man begged a favor of me. 'Will you give me your Bible?' 'Will you promise,' I asked, 'to read it with prayer?' 'I will,' he answered.

"Three years after this interview, I was accosted by a respectable-looking man in Piccadilly. 'Excuse the liberty of the inquiry, sir. Have you visited such a canton in Switzerland, in such a year? And do you recognize this book?' producing from his pocket my well-known Bible. Answering in the affirmative, he then

grasped my hand, and said, 'This gift has been blessed to my soul; and often have I prayed that I might meet you on earth, to thank you for this inestimable boon.' "

#### A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE RELATED.

An intelligent lady, in relating her experience to the church, said, "I was deeply convinced of my sinfulness, and went mourning many days. My soul thirsted for the waters of life, and I earnestly wished that some person would address me on the subject of religion, but *nobody spoke to me*. I sought the society of church members, but they talked of other things and said nothing to me about my soul. I went to the home of Rev. Mr. H — in the hope that he would converse with me, but he made no allusion to the subject, and I returned home sadly disappointed. I do not relate this to reproach any one, but to suggest that Christians should seek opportunities to speak with the unconverted about their spiritual welfare, and I believe they will find persons whom they may benefit and who will thank them for their faithfulness."

A prominent member of the church said, "This is like my own experience. When I was thirteen years old I felt myself a sinner, and tried to pray in secret, and wished that some Christian would talk to me, and tell me how I might be saved. I might thus have been preserved from the life of sin and folly that I afterward lived."

A well known minister gives his experience in this regard as follows: "From an early age I was thoughtful and serious in regard to spiritual things. At the age of sixteen, without any direct suggestion from any source, I began to pray in secret, but I was prevented by diffidence from saying anything of my feeling, and no one spoke to me of my spiritual interests. I was moral and exemplary in my manner of life, and regular and constant in my attendance upon public worship, and, as far as I had the opportunity, upon the social prayer meeting also, but not a word was said to me of my guilt as a sinner or of my personal need of a Saviour. I continued in this way until I was twenty-one years of age, a period of five years, when through the direct personal labor of a young friend, and the fidelity of a pastor, I was led to a public profession of my acceptance of salvation. But if Christians with whom I associated had been faithful to my soul, I have no reason to doubt that I should have been as ready at the beginning of this period as I was at the close, to come into the light and to a public acknowledgment of Christ as my Saviour."

Christians have good reason to believe that the experience of these persons is by no means peculiar. There is no ground for doubt that many persons are prevented by diffidence from revealing their convictions who, through the influence of kind and sympathizing friends, might be brought into the light and joy of the Gospel,

and become useful Christians; but, being neglected by the church, their interest gradually declines and is finally altogether lost. And if they are finally brought to Christ it is only after a long period of darkness and doubt. But if the true view has been presented, who shall estimate the importance of faithful labor in this direction by all who profess to love Christ and the souls of the lost! To the young and to the timid and retiring, especially, is this work of unspeakable moment. To human view a multitude of the young are always ready to be led to Christ, who through the neglect of the church at the critical period, lose their spiritual interest and are again swallowed up by the world.

FOR THE LACK OF THIS LABOR SINNERS ARE  
PERISHING.

There is a direct connection between the present low state of religion in the church and the popular unbelief in regard to the state of the unregenerate. Christians do not believe the teachings of the Scriptures on this subject. It is the theory of the church that sinners are lost and that without Christ they are going down to hell. But the profession of the church on this point is not to any great extent believed. The faith of the average believer is dreamy and uninfluent. Intellectually he accepts the truth, but it takes no hold upon his heart and conscience. For the past quarter of a century he has heard the changes rung on the



doctrine of the goodness of God and in the meantime he has heard nothing, or nothing that has left any impression upon his mind or heart, in regard to the divine holiness, justice or truth. He has heard the Universalist view of the Fatherhood of God so frequently set forth that practically he has come to accept it as the truth. Though he does not consciously adopt it as a tenet of his creed, it has nevertheless practically taken possession of his mind and heart. Having accepted the premise of the Universalist, at heart he accepts his conclusions. He no longer believes in the everlasting torments of the lost, so vividly set forth by our Lord and by his Apostles. Without any process of reasoning, he has come to the feeling that as God is the Father of all men, he cannot really mean what the Scriptures seem to teach in regard to the final portion of the unregenerate. This power of practical unbelief paralyzes his zeal for the honor of Christ and for the saving of souls.

But if the Scriptures are the Word of God there is no basis for this form of doctrine. The Scriptures teach that God is the Father of those and of those only who become his children by faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that all who reject the grace of the Gospel will have their part in the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."\* This truth

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\*Matt. xxv., 41.

cannot be too deeply impressed upon every disciple of Christ. This doctrine is the basis of the believer's call to Christian service. It is because sinners are lost and in danger of an eternal hell, that Christ has made it the duty of his disciples to give them the Gospel.

But as we have already seen it is too plain to admit of question that there is a large class of unregenerate men and women in every Christian land who will be reached only through the instrumentality of lay workers. Even in the most favored regions of Christian influence there are districts or neighborhoods that lie quite beyond the sphere of any church or congregation. They are beyond the reach of any pastoral or ministerial labor. They must be reached by the laity or they cannot be reached at all. That is the only instrumentality at the command of the church by which this work can be accomplished. To all appearance the only hope of sinners in these by-places is in the fidelity of the lay preachers.

But there is also a large class of the unconverted within hearing of the bells of the churches who are equally dependent upon lay preaching. Or if it cannot properly be said that they are *dependent* upon it, at the least it is true that to human view they will be saved only through the direct personal labors of the members of the churches. It may be said that this is not the fault of the church, and that those who

refuse to avail themselves of the means of grace which are brought to their doors assume the entire responsibility of their spiritual state. They might hear the invitations of the Spirit and the Bride if they would, and in their refusal to hear they stand condemned, not only by the word of God, but, as well, by their own consciences. Their prejudice against the church, and against the ministry, and their opposition to the Gospel are their sin, a sin for which they themselves must give account. But while this is true, it is also true that Christ has made it the duty of his servants to go out and "compel them to come in." It is the duty of those who hear the message of the pulpit to extend the invitation to those who refuse to hear it and bring them to Jesus.

There is good reason to believe that if the members of the churches would address themselves in earnest to the work of bringing sinners to Christ, the result would be a great ingathering of souls. We know that the faithful labors of the few who are the exceptions in the churches have been greatly blessed, and we have no reason to doubt that a larger amount of work in this direction would be followed by a proportionately greater result.

Indeed we have a right to anticipate that under a more general discharge of this duty the results would appear in an increased ratio. We should not only see sinners brought to Christ in large numbers, but we

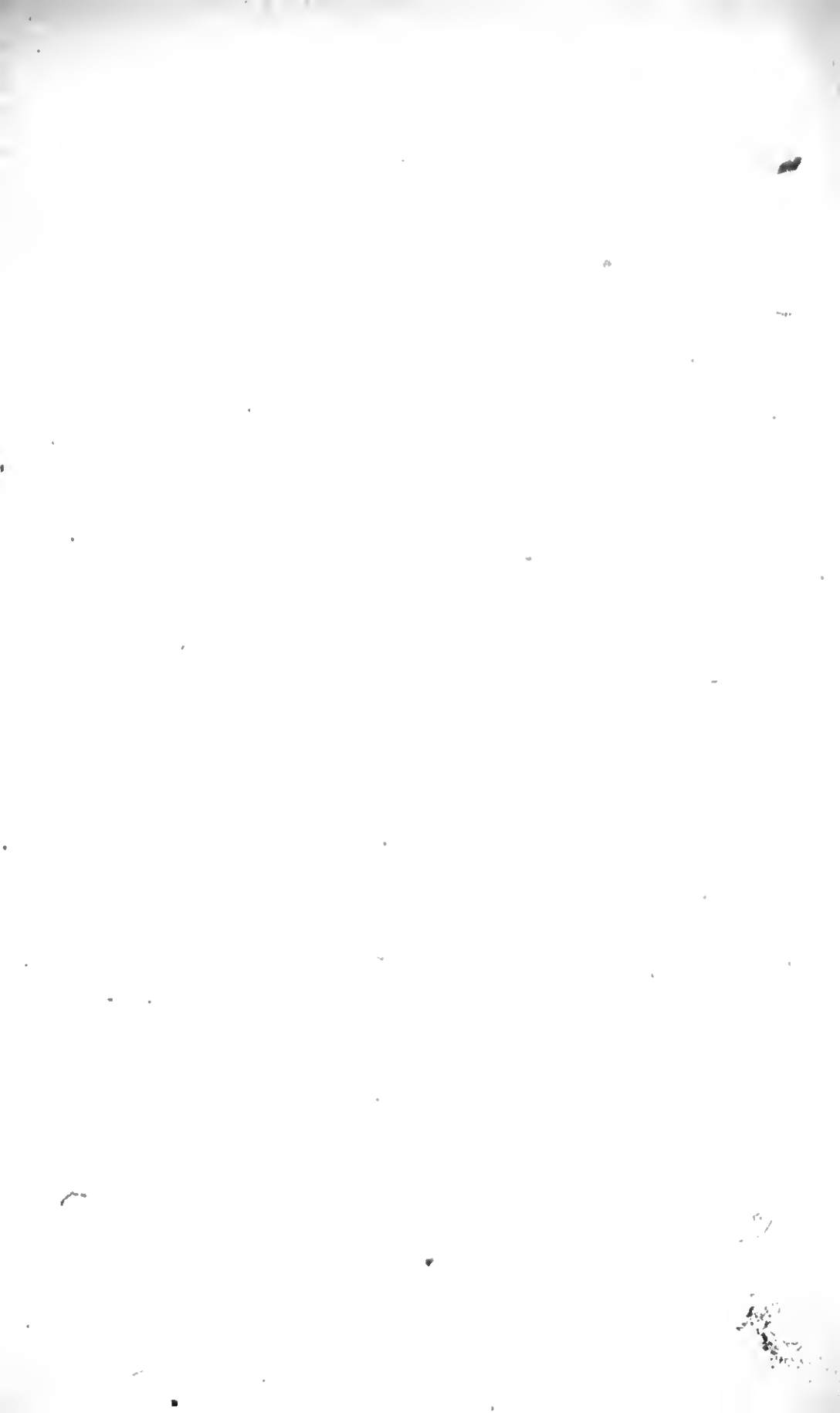
should see the same amount of labor productive of greater results. In a general and concerted effort there would be a relative increase of power. Each laborer would contribute to the efficiency of every other.

One reason doubtless that no more is accomplished by the labor at present expended is, that unbelievers see that the mass of those who profess godliness are doing nothing in this work. They see that they are making no effort to turn sinners to Christ. Their inference from this is that Christians as a body regard the conversion of sinners as a matter of very small consequence. They have come to regard the earnest Christian worker as an ill-balanced enthusiast, and to attach very little importance to his message. But if they saw the church united in earnest lay work, the words of each member would leave a far deeper impression.

It is plain then that sinners are perishing for lack of united and earnest labor on the part of the members of the churches. They are going down to eternal death because the lay work of the church is neglected, and many of them are going with the feeling that no man cares for their souls. Is it not true, then, that every professed disciple of Christ who is doing no Christian work is not only disregarding the call of his Master and bringing forth no fruit to his glory, but is also standing as an obstacle to the

progress of the Gospel. His influence is unfriendly to the work of his more earnest fellow-disciple and he is strengthening the unconverted in their opposition or indifference to the truth. In his unfaithfulness he is shutting "up the kingdom of heaven against men."

But if this be true,—and who will venture to deny it?—what an incentive does this subject present to faithful and earnest labor for Christ and for souls.

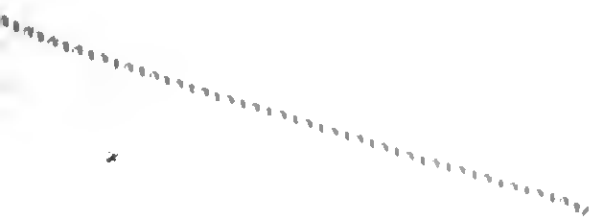


## CHAPTER XI.

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### THE TIME TO COMMENCE.

"Go work to-day in my vineyard."—Matt., xxi., 28.





## THE TIME TO COMMENCE.

THE true believer recognizes his obligation to Christ and intends to do something in his service. He is conscious of a call to unite with "the Spirit and the Bride" in extending the invitations of the Gospel to lost men. It is his conviction that this is his duty, not only to Christ, but also to the ungodly by whom he is surrounded. He is persuaded that to hide the light which he has received and to make no effort to bring others to a share in his glorious hope is glaringly inconsistent with his professed character.

## THE PRESENT NOT A CONVENIENT SEASON.

There is a large class of the professed followers of Christ who are in a good degree conscientious in regard to their duty, who succeed in persuading themselves that the present is not the time to begin their Christian work. They do not resolve to do nothing and they have no thought of dismissing the subject. They mean to do something when it is a suitable time,—when the circumstances favor Christian work. They imagine perhaps that when there is a revival it will be a good time to make an effort to bring sinners to Jesus. But for the present they satisfy conscience with a purpose to do something in the future.

## THE PRESENT, GOD'S TIME.

In opposition to the view of duty above stated, Christ requires the laborers in his vineyard to commence their work at once. Just now is his time. In the requirements of the Gospel it is assumed that all who have accepted Christ as their Saviour have accepted his service. It is assumed that as many as have come into his kingdom have come in as his servants and as laborers in his vineyard. No provision is made for idlers and there are no privileged classes. All are servants. And the command to his laborers is: "Go work to-day in my vineyard." All the commands and all the requirements of the Gospel are in the present tense,—not one of them can be answered by a resolution to be faithful to-morrow, or at any other time in the future. The present is the only time that God gives. The future is in his hand, and whether it is his purpose to grant us future days we do not know. To assume that it is, and to put off our obedience of his commands until an uncertain period of the future is the last measure of presumption.

The obligation to enter upon our service without unnecessary delay is too plain to be misunderstood. If we have any proper regard for the authority of Christ, any gratitude for our own deliverance from the power of sin and death, or any interest in the spiritual welfare of lost men, we shall recognize our

obligation to address ourselves, at once and in earnest, to the work of winning souls.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE.

If the obligation to begin the work of Christ, at once, is too plain to be misunderstood, it would seem that little need be said of the importance of immediate obedience. But aside from the obligation imposed by the words of Christ, there are obvious reasons for which there should be no delay in the commencement of our work. To-day the opportunity comes with the obligation. If Christ calls us to his service he has prepared for us the work to be done. The harvest is ready for the sickle. The unregenerate relative, friend or neighbor is within reach of the invitation which the believer is called to offer. Some of those by whom he is surrounded, perhaps, are hoping to receive it. Possibly some of them are aggrieved that no one has extended it to them. At all events it is possible that some of them might be reached by a faithful presentation of the Gospel message.

But of to-morrow he has no assurance. To-morrow he himself may be unable to extend the invitation. To-day life is lengthened out and strength is given for service. If it is spared for the future it will be spared for usefulness and for a better preparation for the life to come. But if he is neglecting present duty he is neither useful to others nor to

himself. He is neither winning souls nor growing in grace. We grow in grace and in preparation for the life of the redeemed essentially as we are faithful to the obligations of the life that now is. If we are neglecting present duty we are neglecting our preparation for heaven.\*

But if we live to see to-morrow, it will bring to us its own obligations and labors. It will bring a demand for the exercise of all the capacities of which we may be in possession. We shall not be able at any time in the future to bear any burden that be-

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\*Our friends and neighbors are here to-day and gone to-morrow. For them *now* is "the day of salvation;" to-morrow for them and for us, the time of judgment and account. The generation that constitutes this nation in our day will pass away with us; their only opportunity to be saved is now; our only opportunity to lead them to Christ and bless the nation thereby, is now. To-morrow the injury and the loss will be irremediable, and then the judgment.

The thousand millions in this generation that are perishing without the Gospel must receive it from us, or,—never. For them we,—God having made us able to give them the Gospel in our day,—must give account. The glory of the world's conquest for Christ, he is offering to the churches as never to any generation before. Will not the shame of the stripes be commensurate with the failure, if we fail?

Nothing less than the grandeur and the glory of this great enterprise of the world's redemption, from the power of sin and Satan, in which Christ has made us co-workers with himself, and sharers in his glory hereafter, can furnish adequate motives for a Gospel campaign, and save sinners, and go on and on with increasing momentum till Christ shall come again. I. Peter i., 1-10.—"A Campaign of Education."

longs to the present. The duty of to-day must be discharged to-day or the opportunity will be forever lost. A time to atone for the neglect of present duty we shall never see. Every day brings its own duties, and it brings also the only opportunity for discharging them that will ever come to us. The resolution, then, to put off the duty of to-day is a resolution to neglect it,—a resolution to suffer the present opportunity to pass unimproved.

#### UNFITTED FOR FUTURE DUTY BY NEGLECT OF THE PRESENT.

The believer who is doing nothing to-day is very unlikely to be faithful to his duty to-morrow. Neglect of present opportunities is a very poor preparation for future service. Present unfaithfulness is not conducive to future fidelity. In spiritual things, as in intellectual and material, the present is a preparation for the future. It is more than probable that the future will be what the present makes it. The believer who is living in neglect of present duty really has no reason to flatter himself that he shall be faithful at a future day. If he has any honest purpose to do his duty at any period, the time to begin is *just now*.

#### TO-MORROW MAY BE TOO LATE.

It is quite possible that to a certain extent, at least, the opportunities of to-day may not be offered

to-morrow. Some who need the message to-day, may pass beyond its reach before the believer's convenient season shall have arrived. The friend who was in special need of Christian sympathy and the careless neighbor who was open to a word of warning may both have been called to their account. To-morrow it may be too late to do what ought to be done to-day.

It is for reasons such as these that the believer is called-in the Scriptures to enter at once upon his work and that he is admonished to the exercise of earnestness and zeal in its prosecution. The words of the great Apostle to a youthful evangelist are appropriate to every servant of Christ: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; *be instant in season, out of season*; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine."\*

#### EXPERIENCE OF DR. CHALMERS.

Dr. Thomas Chalmers, when away from home on a certain occasion, spent an evening with a number of pious friends and a former parishioner who was seventy-two years of age and apparently in perfectly good health, though alas! as yet without hope in

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\*11. Tim. ix., 1, 2.

Christ. During the evening the conversation took a devout turn, and was continued till a late hour. The old man listened and seemed attentive. Dr. Chalmers observed this and felt inclined to speak to him personally about his eternal interests, but thought it would hardly be proper before the company. The next morning a voice was heard in the old man's room. Dr. Chalmers ran in just in time to see him die. It was a solemn scene, and no sooner was it certain that life was extinct than he called the whole household together and kneeling down offered a most affecting prayer, and gave a solemn exhortation. But he was greatly distressed the whole day, a large part of which was spent with a friend in the woods. "It was touching," said that friend, "to see him sit down on a bank frequently with tears in his eyes, and say: 'Ah, God has rebuked me. I know now what St. Paul means by being *instant in season, out of season*. Had I addressed that old man last night with urgency I might have seemed *out of season* to human eyes, but how seasonable it would have been!'"

There is a regard for propriety which takes account of times and of circumstances and to which the wise Christian worker is never indifferent. But it is one of the successful devices of Satan to persuade those who are moved to a discharge of this duty that the present is not the proper time. He would have them believe that the circumstances of the present are

such as to render it imprudent to say anything on the subject and as to render it even probable that their words may be productive of evil rather than of good. If he succeeds in convincing the timid believer of this his end is accomplished. If he can persuade him to put off the discharge of his duty for the present he has very little solicitude for the future.

If we would escape the bitter tears of this distinguished servant of God, under the consciousness of his neglect of duty, we must learn that just now is God's time to say "Come," and we must learn to suffer no opportunity to pass unimproved. We must learn to "be instant in season, out of season," in our efforts to win souls for Christ.



## CHAPTER XII.

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### THE REWARD OF FAITHFUL SERVICE.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."—Dan. xii., 3.

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## THE REWARD OF FAITHFUL SERVICE.

To the true believer the supreme motive of a life of Christian service is a regard for the authority of Christ, and a zeal for his glory. Recognizing his obligation to love and serve God, he responds to the call of the Gospel in the exercise of a spirit of obedience and of loyalty to his divine Master. He devotes himself to the work of Christ not from any mere hope of reward or from any selfish consideration, but as he is prompted by Christian principle and Christian love. He goes into the vineyard because it is right that he should, because it is his duty.

In harmony with this principle are the impulses of a renewed heart. He is animated by an earnest desire to see lost men brought to an acceptance of the Gospel,—to see them made partakers of the precious hope with which his own heart has been inspired. He loves the work as the service of his divine Master and for what it accomplishes. To the sincere disciple incentives of this character are potential and controlling. It is enough for him that Christ has called him to this service, and that an intelligent regard for his glory and for the saving of souls demands a prompt and hearty response.

But while these are the supreme and controlling motives to every form of Christian service, we may look beyond the requirements of Christian principle

and the impulses of a renewed heart. It is right and fit that with Moses we should have "respect unto the recompense of the reward."\* It is right that with him we should see that the "reproach of Christ" even is "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." We may properly be stimulated to greater diligence in the work of Christ by the glorious reward. Time would fail to notice all the forms in which the faithful disciple receives the reward of obedience. Of the more obvious and important are the following:—

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN GRACES.

Faithful labor for Christ brings its own reward in the vigor which it imparts to the spiritual life. If we limit our view to its reflex influence we shall not fail to see that Christian service secures a large reward. If we really desire to grow in grace, to become more Christ-like and better fitted to honor him, we should address ourselves with assiduity to his work. Perhaps there are no other means through which the believer advances so rapidly in the divine life. Without some form of Christian activity, there can be no healthful and symmetrical development of Christian character. If prayer and the study of the inspired word are the proper aliment of the spiritual nature Christian service is the exercise without which

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\*Heb. xi., 26.

there is only a very imperfect assimilation of spiritual nutriment.

Exercise is a want of the spiritual nature no less than of the physical. Spiritual strength, like physical, is acquired by exercise. It comes of active labor. The bodily powers are developed by bodily exertion. An increase of strength is acquired by the use of that already possessed. The muscles of the laborer have derived their vigor from active and continued employment. His strength is the fruit of his toil. And what is true in this regard of the physical nature is no less true of the spiritual. To the spiritual nature active labor for Christ is what corporeal exercise is to the physical man. Christian strength comes of Christian labor. Robust and manly vigor in the spiritual faculties is acquired only by energetic and continued exercise. If we would advance in the divine life we must do something for Christ. We must go to work in his vineyard.

It is true, then, that Christian work brings its own reward. It develops the Christian graces and establishes the Christian character. It quickens and invigorates all the faculties of the spiritual nature. It increases our love of Christ and our zeal for his glory. It intensifies our interest in the spiritual welfare of the lost, and fits us for larger usefulness. It is a law of our spiritual being that all that we do for Christ from a pure motive serves to increase our

love of his character and our desire to please him by the promotion of his glory. And the more that we do for the salvation of lost men the deeper does our interest in their spiritual welfare become.

But the strengthening of these affections necessarily brings with it an increase of the spirit of prayer. Our interest in communion with Christ is ever proportionate to our love of his character and our zeal for his glory; and our interest in the souls of the lost will determine the measure of earnestness with which we plead with God for their salvation. If we have no disposition to engage in Christian work we have very little of the true spirit of intercessory prayer. We pray for the lost in proportion as we love their souls, and this love is increased by every sincere effort to turn them to Christ.

A similar influence is exerted by this work upon all the graces of the Christian life. An earnest effort to win sinners to Christ can hardly fail to strengthen our faith, to inspire our hearts with a deeper penitence, with a new degree of meekness and patience, with a livelier gratitude, and with a brighter and more abiding hope. In this quickening of our spiritual life our labor receives a large reward.

#### AN INCREASE OF HAPPINESS IN THE PRESENT LIFE.

With regard to the life of every believer, God has a definite plan and purpose. He has an end in view

in calling him into his Kingdom, and this implies a determinate plan in regard to his life and work. We answer this end and conform to this plan in so far as we do his will, as revealed in his Word, and follow according to the measure of our light, the indications of his Providence touching the direction and manner of our service. And just in proportion as we answer the end of our being by conforming our lives to the divine plan in regard to them, we promote our own happiness. It is the purpose of God to make us happy as far as that can be made to accord with the higher end of our being. And in proportion as the higher end is answered by our manner of living and our Christian service, the subordinate end is promoted. In the degree in which we glorify God, we are happy in our present enjoyment of his favor. Our efforts to honor God by bringing sinners to his service are all adapted to promote our present happiness. All that we do for Christ in every department of his work will promote our temporal well-being.

There is a pleasure connected with the legitimate exercise of all of our faculties and powers. Exercise is the end for which they were created, and we are so constituted that this is essential to our well-being. Active employment is a want of our nature and the satisfaction of this want is promotive of happiness.

To this general law of human nature, the capacities of the renewed heart constitute no exception; no less than the intellectual and physical powers, they demand constant exercise, and the satisfaction of this want brings the highest enjoyment. In this direction work for Christ brings its own reward.

But aside from the satisfaction that comes from the exercise of our spiritual faculties, there is a pleasure in the service of Christ. This consciousness gratifies the purest and best aspirations of the renewed heart. It is the highest and holiest form of happiness of which we are capable in this life. There is no other respect in which we are so truly godlike, as in doing good for the gratification of a benevolent spirit. There is no other respect in which we so closely follow Christ.

Of himself he says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."\* This was the end for which he came to earth. He came to do the will of the Father in giving salvation to the lost. But the infinite benevolence, the unspeakable love which moved him to this work is among the highest elements of his infinite blessedness. He is infinitely happy, he is the "ever blessed God," because he is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in this, as in all other perfections of his character.

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\*John iv., 34.



If we may, in this regard, analyze the divine<sup>a</sup>perfections, it will appear that there is no other attribute of divinity that so largely contributes to the unspeakable blessedness of God. Hence, the nearer we approach in this regard to the character of Christ, the more largely shall we partake of his blessedness. The consciousness that we are becoming more like him and that we are following him in our works of Christian benevolence constitutes an abundant reward of our labor. It is a present compensation for every sacrifice and largely contributes to the happiness of our present life.

#### A PROVIDENTIAL BLESSING.

Faithful Christian service brings to the believer the favor of Providence. It secures to him a providential reward for the present life. In this direction his present well-being is promoted. It may not bring wealth or honor. It may not secure personal gratification, in any form. But if it does not, it will give him something better. In some form it will promote his present happiness and well-being. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is," no less than of "that which is to come."\* If we are faithful to Christ, the present life will be the better to us on that account. If faith-

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\*1 Tim. iv., 8.

ful service does not bring us all that we desire, it will bring us a large measure of what we really need. It will give us that favor which is life and that loving-kindness which is "better than life."

### A BRIGHTER CROWN OF GLORY IN HEAVEN.

The present life is not a state of reward and punishment. It is a condition in which neither godliness nor ungodliness receives its full desert. During the life that now is, God sends both to the righteous and to the wicked good and evil, not according to any law or rule which he has revealed to us, but according to his sovereign pleasure. In the present administration of his moral government he has ends in view relating to both classes, which are known only to himself. In what he gives to each and in what he withholds, the presumption is that he has reference to these ends.

But in heaven the servants of Christ will be rewarded "according to their works." The measure of their felicity and glory will be determined by that of their fidelity to Christ in his kingdom on earth. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, *according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*"\* "And behold, I come quickly; and

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\*II. Cor. v., 10.

my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."\* "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."†

We are inclined to think of heaven and hell as places or states of being in which all stand upon an entire equality. To the ordinary mind the one is an embodiment of the idea of happiness and the other of the idea of misery. To be saved is to be happy; to be lost is to be miserable. In a sense this conception is true. All the saved are perfectly happy and all the lost are inexpressibly wretched. In this sense all stand upon a level.

But it is also true that the righteous and the wicked will be happy or miserable in proportion as they have been righteous or wicked in this life. The righteous will receive a full recompense of their obedience. They will receive a crown of glory which will be an ample reward of their Christian service. The book of God's remembrance will contain a complete record of all that they have done in the vineyard of their Lord. Nothing will be omitted; not even the smallest or most insignificant act of conscientious obedience will have escaped the scrutiny of the recording angel. "God is not unrighteous

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\*Rev. xxii., 12. †Matt., xiv., 27.

to forget your work and labor of love.”\* He remembers all the service that they have rendered and their reward will be *according to their fidelity*.

This reward is solely of grace. It is bestowed upon the righteous, not because they are worthy, but wholly for the sake of Christ. It is purchased for them by his atonement,—by what he has done and suffered in their behalf,—by his obedience unto death. It is bestowed upon them that believe only of the free and sovereign grace of God in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it is according to their works. Every man shall receive his own reward “according to his own labor.”†

This is true, as we have seen, only of the reward of heaven. While the righteous have the promise of the divine favor, they have no promise of a full reward of their obedience in the present state. The promise relates solely to the future. To his persecuted disciples Jesus says: “Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, *your reward is great in heaven*.”‡ All the regenerate receive a reward in the present life, but it is only “in heaven” that they receive a reward that is “according to their works.” There they will receive the full and inestimable reward of all that they have done and suffered in the service of Christ. And this reward will determine

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\*Heb. vi., 10. †I. Cor. iii., 8. ‡Luke vi., 23.

the measure of their happiness,—the degree of their exaltation and of their felicity in the Kingdom of God on high.

In the measure of their happiness the glorified saints have been likened to vessels of unequal capacity, all of which are completely filled. Of each the cup of happiness will be full, but in their capacity for happiness, there will be a wide, an endless diversity, and this diversity will have been determined by what they have done and suffered for Christ in his kingdom on earth.

The converted thief who went to heaven from the malefactor's cross is perfectly happy. He has been delivered from everything in his character or in his surroundings that can disturb his peace or interrupt his blessedness and joy. But between his capacity for happiness and that of the Apostles and martyrs, the difference is worldwide. This difference was determined not by natural gifts or endowments, but by the life on earth. There each was prepared for the life of the redeemed in glory, and each now reaps the reward to which his life entitled him. Each is now receiving a reward that is according to his works. And this rule of bestowing the reward places between them an immeasurable distance.

Each has been delivered from the power and curse of sin and made partaker of everlasting life in the presence of God. "They that be wise shall shine as

the brightness of the firmament." This is true of all the redeemed. It is true of those who occupy the lowest place in heaven. But "they that turn many to righteousness," will shine "as the stars for ever and ever." The difference in the exaltation and happiness of the two classes will be as the difference between the brightness of the firmament and the glory of the stars. As the stars stand out from the brightness of the firmament, so they that have rendered faithful service to Christ, that have turned many to righteousness, will stand out among those who have simply been wise in securing the salvation of their own souls. And as "one star differeth from another star in glory," so the crowns of the faithful servants of Christ will differ in their resplendence.

In what this difference in the exaltation and felicity of the redeemed saints will consist, we know only in part. There appears no ground for doubt that their happiness in heaven, as on earth, will be determined in some degree by the measure of their likeness to Christ, by the vigor of the spiritual life, and by the conformity of the mind and heart to the divine character. As they are in a higher degree conformed to the divine perfections, they will partake more largely of the divine blessedness. But it is to be presumed that something beyond this is implied in the promise to reward every man according to his

works. As the reward is wholly gracious the promise seems to mean something more than is implied in the operation of a law of our spiritual being. But where the Scriptures are silent, conjecture is vain. Indeed, it may be doubted whether it is possible that human language could convey to our minds what it has not pleased God to reveal.

If the true doctrine of the reward in heaven has been presented what an incentive does it offer to faithful labor for Christ and for souls! If it is profitable to labor for the largest temporal reward how shall we estimate the profit of faithful labor for Christ? How shall we compute the reward of turning many to righteousness? If we could conceive what it is to "shine" in heaven "as the stars for ever and ever" we could form some estimate of the value of the reward of true Christian service. But we learn something of its priceless value when we have discovered that it can neither be expressed nor conceived. In comparison, then, with this how poor is the richest temporal possession! How vain and empty are the riches, the honors and the pleasures of this life!

But if we have no adequate conception of the value of the reward of the faithful laborer, how shall we estimate the loss of the unfaithful servant? Who shall tell us what it is to "be saved; yet so as by fire?" Who shall estimate what it is to have our

works "burned" and in consequence to "suffer loss"?\* If we can apprehend in its length and breadth the language of the Apostle on this subject, we can understand the loss of the ~~loth~~lothful and unfaithful servant. And with this we shall have some comprehension of the incentive which this doctrine presents to faithful labor for Christ.

### A DREAM OF HEAVEN.

A youthful disciple of Christ for several years had professed her faith and lived an irreproachable Christian life. But failing health caused her much suffering without depriving her of the means of usefulness. Of a timid disposition and in a degree distrustful of herself she was accustomed to say that she hardly dared engage in Christian work as her hands were altogether unfit for service so glorious. But a change came over her. She said to a friend: "I have had a dream. I thought I was in heaven and I saw there two crowns, one plain and one jeweled. I thought, O, if I may but wear the plainest crown I shall be satisfied and neither ask nor wish for anything more. But as I spoke my thoughts to myself, one of the bright-winged came to me and said: 'It is your duty to wear a jeweled crown.' And when I thought of my advantages, my Christian friends,

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\*I. Cor. iii., 15.



my means of usefulness, I saw that it was not right that I should be content with a bare entrance into heaven, but that mine must indeed be a jeweled crown."

This dream presents the true view of the believer's privilege and duty. If we will we may all wear crowns embellished with many jewels. This is the privilege, not of the great alone, not of the learned or the eloquent, not of the wealthy or of those in exalted stations, or in positions of social prominence exclusively, but of all the disciples of the Lord Jesus. The prize is held out alike to the humblest and to the most exalted. And as the jeweled crown is the privilege of all, so also it is the duty of all. We are not to be content with entering heaven, "so as by fire." If we are true to our calling we shall recognize the duty as well as the privilege of wearing a many jeweled diadem.

#### THE VIEW OF HANNAH MORE.

Hannah More, in writing to Wilberforce in regard to their labors among the poor and neglected in England, makes the following remark: "What comfort I feel in looking around on these starving and half-naked multitudes, to think that by your liberality many of them may be fed and clothed! And oh, if but one soul is rescued from eternal misery, how may we rejoice over it in another state, where perhaps it may

not be one of your smallest felicities that our friendship was turned to some useful account in advancing the good of others, and I humbly presume to hope, in improving ourselves for that life which shall have no end."

This distinguished saint had caught the true spirit of Christian service. She saw by the eye of faith something of the glorious reward of faithful labor for Christ.

In many instances, doubtless, the faithful Christian worker will receive a reward in heaven, in this direction, that he had not anticipated in the present life. He may be permitted to meet some who have been saved through his instrumentality whom he had not been permitted to welcome to the church on earth and of whose acceptance of Christ he had no knowledge. Where he had sown in tears and was not permitted to reap in joy, the seed has taken root and borne fruit unto eternal life. Though the fruit of his labor was gathered by another, he will not fail of his reward.

On his death bed, Harlan Page said to his wife: "I know that it is all of God's grace, and nothing that I have done; but I think that I have had evidence that *more than one hundred souls have been converted to God* through my own direct and personal instrumentality." What peace and joy must this reflection have imparted to the closing days of his life! How blessed in the face of death is the remembrance of such a

work! And who can doubt that his service of Christ on earth will greatly augment his happiness in heaven! Who can doubt that the souls won to Jesus through his instrumentality will be stars in his crown of glory! "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? *For ye are our glory and joy.*"\*

But whatever may be true of the particular form in which it is to come, the Scriptures leave us no room to doubt that our work for Christ will receive an abundant and glorious reward. They teach us in language that need not be mistaken, that all we do in his service will be held in everlasting remembrance, and that in heaven it will be set to our account. In heaven it will be literally true that "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor."†

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\*I. Thess. ii., 19, 20. †I. Cor. iii., 8.



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